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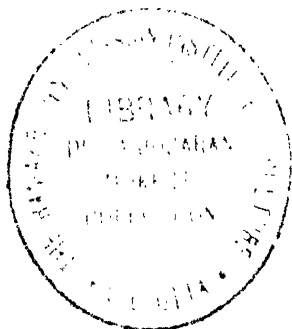
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ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

BY
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

INTRODUCTION.

"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner" says the Holy Quran on the subject of religious controversy. How much bitterness in the world can be avoided, if the Christian critics of Islam generally and missionaries particularly, only keep in mind the above principle of the Holy Book. In their zeal for criticism, not only the interested missionaries, but even European scholars, who ought to have been more liberal, have proved themselves mere bigoted theologians and *Odium Theologicum* appears to be their cult in all matters connected with Islam. To some of them Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is "one inspired by the Devil", to some "Islam is the greatest curse to humanity" and to

most Islam and Muhammad are the symbol of the "Fire and Sword". Criticism like this is abuse pure and simple, and abuse is no argument. To any one aware of the spirit of Jesus, the Charitable, the *Optima Theologicum* would appear to be alien to the spirit of true Christianity. But the general trend of Christian criticism on religions other than Christianity specially Islam, would tend to prove that *Optima Theologicum* is Christianity itself !

Christian critics of Islam do always forget the real nature of the basis of their own religion and, in their over zeal, make extravagant and ridiculous claims. For example, they claim that Christianity is universal and superior to Islam and that Islam is an inferior religion only fit for uncultured and primitive men. They further assert that Islam is the least original of all religions and that it has been merely borrowed from the other religions of the world specially Judaism. Had these Christian critics simply contented themselves

with the allegation of lack of originality in Islam in the sense that it preached nothing totally new, which was not already in the Theology of the World, Muslims could have agreed with them, because Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) never claimed to have preached an entirely new set of principles. All that he claimed was that he restored the truth, which is always one, to its pristine purity. As a matter of fact, this is the burden of the Holy Quran, and any one who has gone through the Holy Book even once, can find this principle preached not only in the very beginning of the Book, but throughout the whole text. For this reason the Holy Book has been called the "Reminder".

But thus far and no further can we tolerate our Christian critics. We must differ when they assert that Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) deliberately borrowed from the various religious Books of the world and that in this attempt he was helped by

others. We must say an emphatic "No" when the Christian critics go a step further and say that Muhammad was therefore insincere, as he pretended to be a prophet when he was really no better than a mere plagiarist. Lord Muhammad was no deliberate eclectic. We hold that since Islam came from the same One Source from which other religions also proceeded, there must necessarily be points of similarity between Islam and the other Faiths but where interpolations by men have corrupted the text of the latter there must be differences.

This is a big claim for Islam. Yet it is true to the very letter, and of all religious books in the world, the Holy Quran is the only book which has come down to us uncorrupted, as admitted even by the worst Christian critics themselves. Let any honest seeker after truth compare Islam with any other religion, and he will find to his satisfaction, that his common sense and reason stand by the tenets of Islam in all points of difference. This is exactly what

is proposed to be done in this book, and since the Christian critics of Islam, have filled the world with the claim of the superiority of Christianity over Islam, it is proposed in this small volume to see wherein lies the alleged superiority of Christianity. For this purpose, we may leave aside the points of similarity. We have only to look to the points of difference and this small volume is a study of the special features of Christianity in which alone must lie the vaunted superiority, if any, of Christianity over Islam. The book may be defective. It may have some errors but to err is human and to forgive divine.

In religious criticisms we must be definite. We cannot afford, like the Christian critics, to make only vague and general statements. Such statements while proving nothing are, on the whole, liable to create bitterness. This we propose to avoid. Muslims cannot afford to be ungracious and abusive. The above verse of the Holy Quran puts a stop to all such indulgences. We cannot

calumniate the great ones of any religion, much less Jesus, one of the greatest prophets of the Lord. Islam is too charitable to allow even discrimination between prophets, and if in this book a comparison or contrast has been made between the Founders of Islam and Christianity, it has been made, not between Lords Muhammad and Jesus (on whom be peace and blessings of God), but between Lord Muhammad and Jesus Christ, the Son of God of the Bible. Muslims hold that Lord Jesus Christ never ascribed Divine Sonship to himself, but taught only what other prophets of the world before him had taught, namely, the Unity of God and his own apostleship. As a matter of fact, Muslims only are true Christians as they alone follow the great prophet of Nazareth. Others may only call themselves Christians and believe in a set of lifeless dogmas manufactured by the Church. If the spirit of Jesus was not to take pride in monopolising all good to himself but in rejoicing, at the good wherever

and by whomsoever done, as observed by R. Bosworth Smith in his "Mohammed and Mohammadanism" surely Muslims and not Christians can claim this spirit. It is the Muslims and not the Christians who believe in universal prophecy. The spirit of the Anti-Christ, embodied in the term "Odium Theologicum" is indeed the spirit of Christendom to-day and the latest incarnation of this spirit is one Rev. W. H. Shaw, an Anglican missionary in the Kenya Colony. It is not really understood what can be the motive of such persons. If it is conversion even to their Christianity, surely abuse is not the best way. If responsible people of the Church lack this ordinary common sense, the cause of the religion of the Church is pitiable indeed !

But this lack of common sense in Christian missionaries must not lull Muslims down to sleep. We must be active and realise our mission. We are not merely to defend Islam. We are to propagate Islam. We must therefore attack. But in our

attack we must be clean. We must discard the missionary weapons. The Quranic principle laid down above, must be our guide. But move we must. We must exert in the way of the Lord *Fi-Salee-Lil-Lahe*. We should live for Islam and must never rest content, till we have conveyed its message to all the creeks and corners of the world. Islam must illuminate the spiritually dark West. We must see to it. But it is difficult, nay, impossible until Muslim young men realise their duty to Allah and His Religion. Personal prayers and fastings are good. But to combine them with preaching and propagation of Islam is better. Let Muslim young men realise this. Let them contribute their quota, howsoever humble and insignificant, to the cause of Islam. They are Islam's agents. They are the oil of the "Light of the Lord". But do they realise it ? Let them remember that they will be held accountable before Allah and His Rasool for their neglecting the cause of Islam. Allah sent Muhammad (on whom

be peace and blessings of God) as *Saiyed-ul-Mursaleen* and desired to make his followers the ideal nation of the world. Can you Muslims then afford to be irresponsible ? Can you idle away your time in frivolous pursuits ? Can novel-reading replace the Talawat-Sharif and the Theatre and Bioscope the *Salat* ? Should gross materialism replace that life-giving spirituality attainable only through Islam ? Muslim young men ! wake up. Qualify yourselves as Islamic missionaries and rush to the great religious battle that is raging all round. Recruit as soldiers of Islam. Only be Muslims and, as the day follows the night, victory shall be yours. "*He it is who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all religions*" says the Holy Quran. Be therefore confident. May Allah grant you zeal for His religion ! Amen ! ! !

Calcutta,
The 22 August, 1923. }

Md. Amir Alam.

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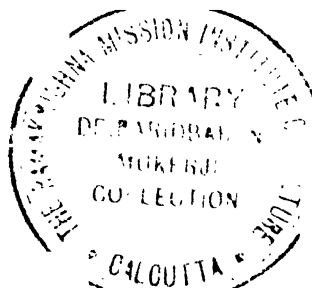
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Islam and Christianity.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The essential points of difference between Islam and Christianity are the Christian doctrines of (1) the Original Sin of man, (2) the Vicarious Atonement, (3) the Sonship of Jesus Christ, (4) the Blessed Trinity and (5) the exclusiveness of Christianity compared to the universality of Islam. These are the special features of Christianity and its superiority over Islam must lie in them. It is therefore, proposed to take up each of these characteristics separately and discuss them reasonably and fairly.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

Due to the fall of the first parents of humanity, man according to Christianity, is a sinner and thus there is a distinct cleavage between the Holy Creator and the sinful creature. God is all Holy and therefore unapproachable by sinners. No efforts on the part of man can rid him of his sins, and nothing can make him worthy enough to deserve the companionship of the One on High, or in other words, to experience and enjoy the felicity and bliss of being one with Him. For man it is impossible, and of all religions on earth, Christianity is the one religion, which emphatically preaches this doctrine and makes salvation to mankind depend, not on personal efforts at reform, but on something else, an outside agent. In other words, Christianity preaches to the world that man is incapable of reform

spiritually to such an extent as to get rid of his sins and be one with the Holy One. God is Light because of His Holiness, man is darkness because of his sins. There can be no light therefore, where there is darkness. This is the position taken up by Christianity. Christian theology starts with this proposition and the whole fabric of the Church is based upon this doctrine as will appear hereafter.

GOD IS MERCIFUL :—He sees the difficulties man is in, and sympathises with him. But the Holy One can not uplift the sinner. The sin has to be got rid of first. The mercy of God works. Measures are taken to save man and, according to Christian theology, the one way out of the difficulty appears to be a Vicarious Atonement for his sin. But the sin is great, and the Christians think that the atonement must be proportionately great, for the greater the sinner the greater the saint required. What, however, can be greater than the only Son of God and there comes in Jesus Christ

to save man-kind from his sins. Christ is crucified and the sacrifice is great. God's only Son dies for man-kind and the death is not in vain. The burden of sin is off the shoulders of man and, once more, since the fall of his first parents, he walks free—sinless holy and pure. The road to heaven is open and the only obstacle to the spiritual development of man is removed. But every thing has its price. So, says the Church, this passport to heaven can not be granted unless the price is paid. You have to believe in the Sonship of Jesus before you can claim a share of the bliss coming out of the great sacrifice. You have to be admitted into the fold before the shepherd can take care of you. Subscribe to the doctrine of Sonship of Jesus and according to Christian theology your sins are off your shoulders and saved you must be. Once the evil is gone, the road to spiritual development is clear and the golden vista leading to Heaven is visible and Christ Jesus leads you on to the abode of bliss and, you stand face to

face before the Father, who has blessed you in the Son.

The above is the statement of a Christian's case. It will be seen how the doctrine of Original Sin necessitated Vicarious Atonement and how the latter brought in the doctrine of Sonship. Take away the doctrine of Original Sin and the whole fabric of Christian theology falls to the ground. As this latter doctrine is very important in Christianity, it is discussed below to start with.

CHAPTER I.

The Doctrine of Original Sin of Man.

Christianity, as observed above, makes it impossible for man to attain salvation through his personal efforts. The sin, it takes like a cancer eating into the very vitals of man's spirituality. Man can not develop spiritually until this cancer is healed, this obstacle removed. Sin is a load-stone, which keeps man chained down to the earth in spite of his best efforts to soar up to heaven. No spiritual growth is possible without the removal of sin, and the removal of sin, according to Christianity, is an operation which must be performed first before man can find his spiritual legs. This operation consists in the belief in the Sonship of Jesus. You must believe so, before you can be free from your sin. Thus the very starting point of Christianity is a dogma,

compared to which man's personal merits, howsoever great, are absolutely nothing, No amount of good work alone can improve man a jot. Believe in this dogma and then, of course, your good works begin to bear fruit and you are on the road to bliss.

The above clears up the position taken up by Christianity sufficiently. Let us now examine and see how far it stands to reason and common sense. First of all let us see what do the Christians mean by the original sin of man? Original sin is thus defined in Webster:--

"The innate sin, or depravity, inherited from our parents, and the source of all actual sins. It originated in the first sin of Adam, the father of the human race". This sin of Adam consists in his fall which is detailed in Chapter III of the Genesis. The fall was due to the disobedience of Adam to God's command. Thus far all the semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are agreed. But Islam differs from both Judaism and Christianity in the conception

of sin in the nature of the sons of Adam. With Christianity, sin originates in Adam, and is transferred from generation to generation to all sons of Adam. The poison at the root must be present in the trunk and branches and the human race can never, according to Christianity, be supposed to be free from the weakness of the first parents. Sin is latent in man like the fire in the flint.

In order to fully understand this view, let us first understand what is meant by sin itself. Apart from the Muslim idea of sin, let us see what even the Christians understand by sin. Sin is universally conceded to be an act of transgression against the laws of God. It is an act of going against the will of God. Even Christians accept this conception of sin. If sin consists in going against the will of God, the possible undoing of sin can be no other than gaining the pleasure of God. Did Adam after his fall win the pleasure of God? Let us consider the following verses of the Genesis Chapter III:—

"17. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ;

18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ;

19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

Adam's lot is made the harder on account of his fall. But does this hard lot of Adam and, after him of all his sons, signify the permanent displeasure of God for this single act of disobedience to His command or does it mean that as a result of the fall due to his having tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge and thereby gaining the consciousness of good and evil, Adam was essentially changed into a new being who

could only live on the earth under the circumstances prevailing thereon ? The burden of the story of the fall in the Genesis is to show that Adam was changed after the fall. God therefore placed him under circumstances most befitting this new Adam. The statement made in the above quoted verses of the Genesis refers only to these new circumstances, namely, those hard ones prevailing on this earth under which Adam had, and his race has to live.

Here the question is : was it the will of God under the changed circumstances to bring about the creation of man or was the creation of man a permanent mark of Divine displeasure ? Was the creation of man—the noblest of God's creatures—brought about in His Holy pleasure through His creative faculty or did it come through His wrath as a result of the fall ? If plants and animals were created through Divine pleasure and through His Holy design, can it be reasonably supposed that man, who according to the same Bible was made in God's

own image, was created through His wrath merely by the accident of the fall without a previous design on His part? Was God forced to create man through one sinful act of Adam?

In Chapter V of the Genesis we read :—

1. *“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him ;*

2. *Male and female created he them ; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.”*

“God blessed them” conclusively proves that even according to the Genesis story Adam after his fall gained the Divine pleasure. It being so, the sin of Adam due to his first fall was removed because, if it was the Divine displeasure that had created the sin it was the Divine pleasure which must necessarily remove that sin. True, Adam never regained his position before the fall, but this does not imply that God was still displeased with him. In his new state Adam is blessed by God and he enters the

life of this world, hard though it may be; with the full sanction of the Holy Will of God. Where then is the sin in Adam ? Where does then the theory of the original sin of man stand ? As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as original sin even according to the Genesis.

Man according to the Christian theory of the original sin is naturally sinful. This amounts to saying that man can not but commit sin. If it be so, if the nature of man is so constituted by God Himself as to commit sin unavoidably, if man has no freedom here, if he is a mere machine, if he is a mere instrument of sin in the hands of a higher power, how can that power fairly punish him for his sins ? How can God punish man for acts for which He Himself is responsible ? If man has no choice how can there be freedom of will ? If there be no freedom of will how can there be any responsibility of man before God ? If there be no responsibility there can be no sin. If there be no sin how can man be naturally sinful ?

THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN OF MAN. 13

As a matter of fact, sin there is and there is enough of it in man. Existence of sin implies grant of discretion to man. Discretion gives responsibility and the sense of this responsibility for one's action before God is the root of both virtue and vice. If we abuse our discretion and ignore our responsibilities we commit sin. If, however, we make proper use of our discretion and are alive to our sense of responsibility to God we practise virtue. Thus the use of our discretion is virtue and its abuse sin. We know that God will reward us for helping the needy. It is open to us to choose to help or refuse. Nothing forces us, but this innate sense of responsibility. If we choose to help the needy we commit a virtuous act. This is the right use of our God-given discretion. If, however, we refuse with the full knowledge of our accountability before God, we abuse our discretion and hence commit sin. Thus the one source of sin lies in the abuse of our God-given discretion. Every one knows

that this is true. What then about the nature of man being essentially sinful? Where does it stand?

Is man naturally sinful? If not, how can the existence of sin, in the life of man be accounted for? This is the difficulty with the Christians, and to solve this difficulty, man is made naturally sinful, and the fall of Adam, the first parent of humanity is brought to prove this sinfulness. If the father is sinful, to the Christians, the son also must be sinful. But is this position tenable? As already observed, the root of sin lies in our sense of responsibility due to our God-given discretion. This discretion however, is capable of being fed and developed according to the circumstances man is in. No man inherits this discretion from his parents but he gets this from God as his light when set on the journey down to this dark earth. This essential liberty is a Divine gift to every man, the noblest the meanest alike. It is present in every man. It is essential for man and, hence like all

things essential for him, it does not depend on an accident—the accident of birth. It is the very root out of which man must grow ultimately and, this cannot be left to circumstances over which man has no control and for which he has no responsibility. The son has no control over his father neither is he responsible for his actions. How can the son then be made to depend for the most essential thing in his life—this essential discretion—on the circumstances of his father? How can “A” be made responsible for “B’s” actions. Does it correspond with the idea of justice and mercy in God? If one does not depend upon others for the physical necessities of his life—the air, the water and the food—how can he depend for the one thing most needful for his spiritual life, on others? As man can not be man but for this sense of responsibility for his actions, like all his other essential qualities, this sense must be innate in man—implanted by the Creator and not made dependent upon the frail accident of birth.

Birth is an accident and must produce only accidental and not essential tendencies. A man may be a hardened criminal. It is just possible that his son may have a criminal tendency inherited from his father. But this inherited criminality must be differentiated from that God-given sense of responsibility and God-given tendency of man present in him essentially. This inherited criminality does not deprive him of his God-given discretion and he has still left the option to choose. This option is liable to be influenced by outward circumstances. It is capable of being much too powerful with man's associations. If the association is good the inherited criminality may be altogether destroyed. It may be a serpent but it can be killed. In the case of the hardened criminal's son the ever present criminality of his father before his eyes, together with the censure of the public, acts like a deterrent on him and his innate sense revolts at it. This may not suffice. But the fact must be recognised that in every

act of criminality there is something in man which revolts and acts like a deterrent. This accusing spirit helped by favourable circumstances suffices to blot out the accidental tendencies altogether. A criminal's son may be criminal but he is so, not so much owing to his inherited criminality as owing to the circumstances of his own life. As a matter of fact his own circumstances, his own associations are the main factors contributing to his criminality. Thus man is sinful not essentially or naturally but circumstantially. It is the circumstances that make or unmake sin and not the nature of man. Where then stands the proposition that man is naturally a sinner ?

Again Christianity says man is born in sin. If by being born in sin is meant the inherited sin, the question has been already disposed of. If, however, the idea refers to the sexual relation responsible for the birth of man, a word only is necessary to dispel this erroneous conception. If sexual relation between man and wife result in sin

why should God create woman ? Can any sane man dare to vilify that most sacred relationship called "marriage" ? Can the fatherhood or the motherhood be an act of sin. ? Can the only means of procreation of all beings be an evil ? If so, how can this evil originate in God, who is all Holy ? God can not then be the creator of man. Is there a Christian in all the world, who, in spite of this Church-woven doctrine of his, dare believe in his satanic creation ? If not, man is not born in sin.

Then again Christianity takes sin as a cancer eating into the vitality of man's spirituality. According to a Christian preacher whom, I happened to hear "the engine is there, the steam is there. Yet the engine will not move. There comes the driver and he takes the engine up to the hills". This is how Christianity regards sin. Everything in man is there already. But the burden of sin keeps him down chained to the earth. He can not move with all the power of the engine. He lacks a driver

like the engine and this driver is not Jesus Christ followed in practice, but a Jesus believed in as the only begotten Son of God. To the Christian Engine this belief is the driver and up the Engine goes to the hills.

How far this load-stone view of sin can be true let us examine. It tends to personify sin. It tends to give sin an individuality. It makes us believe that sin is an entity. But is it so? Sin is nothing. It has no separate existence. It is mere product of certain circumstances in the life of man. The innate sense of responsibility when abused, is the root of sin as already observed. Sin is a mere idea, originating in our abuse of the God-given discretion. The abuse depends much upon circumstances and circumstances differ from man to man. Thus every man is differently capable of influencing this abuse. He has the power to do so. Every man is therefore capable to do away with this cancer of sin, this load-stone. Every one may thus be the driver of his own engine. He does not stand

in need of an outside agent. His own sincere efforts should suffice to move his engine.

Thus if sin is neither original nor natural and inherited, but only accidental and circumstantial where stands the Christian belief in the original sin ? To Islam man is naturally sinless, essentially holy. It is his contact with worldliness and the abuse of his God-given discretion that make him sinful. It is his associations, the circumstances of his own life that tend to make him sinful. It is the going off the rails of his own pure nature that creates sin. Nothing is more appropriate and indicative of the Islamic conception of sin than the Arabic terms for sin. They are "*Jannah*" "*Ism*" etc. All imply deviation from the right path, a going off the rails, a derangement of the spirit, a derailment. How beautiful and true is the very idea. The very terms are suggestive and full of meaning. As opposed to these terms for sin is "*Taubah*" which means a reversion, a

turning back to the right path. This impresses the idea of sin from the positive point of view. There must be a deviation before there can be a coming back. Referring to the accident of the fall of Adam the Holy Quran says :—

“And We said : O Adam ! dwell you and your wife in the garden, and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish, and do not approach this tree, for then you will be of the unjust.

“But the devil made them both fall from it, and caused them to depart from that (state) in which they were ; and We said : Get forth, some of you being the enemies of others, and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time.

“Then Adam received (some) words from His Lord, so He turned to him (mercifully); surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

“We said : Go forth from this (state) all ; so surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My

guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve"—The Cow, verses 35-38 :

The first two verses touch upon the accident how Adam and Eve fell through their disobedience to God and yielding to the temptation of the Devil. The third verse relates how God in His mercy turns to Adam and vouchsafes to him a revelation. The fourth verse records the text of the revelation and makes the salvation of mankind depend upon following the Revelation and nothing else. Thus in Islam there is no original sin. The sin of the fall is condoned by God's Mercy on Adam and salvation is made to depend on man's own choice to follow the right path. Adam started his life on the earth with a clean sheet and with the full approval of God, who makes only one condition for salvation namely, the obedience to the Divine Revelation in which man is free to have his own option. With the freedom of will given to man, this condition can be the only possible condition and that is what the Holy Book

records. Let a sane man think for himself. Let him go deep down into his own soul and let him consult his inward monitor, that voice of God in man called conscience, and, he will find that the Islamic conception of sin will not only appeal to him but will appear to be the only possible conception of sin. Yet Christianity has to teach Islam its novel conception of sin! Is it in this doctrine that the superiority of Christianity over Islam consists? Let the readers decide.

CHAPTER II.

The Doctrine of Vicarious Atonement.

Is the belief in the Atonement of Christ a sure panacea for our sins ? Is it the one remover of all sins ? Either it is or it is not. If it is, what about the billions and billions of mankind, who lived and died in the dim past countless years before Jesus Christ was born ? What about the mighty men of yore—from Adam down to the last Hebrew prophet before John the Baptist ? What about Noah, Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Budha and their true followers ? Are all doomed to perdition ? Are there great works done in ignorance of this Christian dogma to go in vain ? Were not they also the children of the same Merciful One who is the Father of Christ ? Could that Merciful God, the Creator of all afford to neglect the provision of spiritual

food to mankind so long ? The very idea is the negation of God's mercy. To administer this royal remedy ages afterwards when innumerable human beings should have died of the fell cancer is cruelty and partiality if deliberate, and ignorance if otherwise. God is neither. This dogma can not therefore but be false.

Not only is this dogma very injurious to the perfect attributes of God, but is also unnatural in the extreme. It is indefensible in itself. In Nature, which is the Law of God no vicarious atonement is known. Of course, atonement there is. But this atonement is confined to the object itself and does not extend to an outside agent. One breaks the laws of nature and suffers for it. He is ill and is restored to health. His breaking the law is sin, his suffering is his atonement and his health is his reward. Again one breaks the law of society. He steals. He is punished and is again reformed. To steal is sin, the punishment is its atonement and the reform its reward.

Atonement is, as a matter of fact, "At-one-ment" with one's true self. The breach of Nature's Laws working within and without man is going off the rails, a derailment. The reconciliation, however, takes place through one's consciousness of having done wrong. He suffers physically and mentally for his fault and once more becomes "at-one" with his true self, which was temporarily deranged through his guilt. Thus the one atonement known to Nature—the Law of God—is "at-one-ment" with one's true self. It is an atonement lying within the object and not without it, anything in the shape of being vicarious. The Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement is therefore unnatural.

This doctrine is worse than unnatural. It is barbarous. The notions of vicarious atonement may be traced to the savage custom of sacrificing an animal for the expiation of sins. Its root lies deep down in the pre-historic idea of primitive heathenism or in the undeveloped brain of a Fetish

—worshipper of the Dark Continent. It establishes to the hilt the Fetish-worshipper's notion of animal sacrifice to appease his angry spirits. This is horrible, too horrible for a modern man. To think of the innocent lamb of Nazareth to have been sacrificed on the cross for the redemption of the sins of mankind by the Just and Merciful God, is too great a contradiction. God is just. Is it the demand of Absolute Justice that "A" should suffer for "B"? Mankind committed sin, why at all should the Only Son of God be sacrificed? The sacrifice, if helpful at all should be helpful to Christ and Christ alone. It is he who suffered and, in all canons of justice and fair play it is he and he alone, who should be rewarded. To rob Peter to reward Paul will not do either with God or with man. But if according to Christian theology this is Absolute Justice may God give us the sense to realise that in the sacrifice of our brother lies our salvation! Of all men, perhaps, the robbers and the cut-throats

do actually realise this. So selfish a sense of justice has not yet appealed to man and if it be a real boon it is indeed a speciality of the Church religion !

This belief must be treated as a relic of the savage ages during which Christianity struck root and grew. Certainly it can not be said that this belief has any ennobling effect on mankind. Man's spirituality will not be the poorer for it. It is already rampant and in full force among the savages of Africa, Australia and other parts of the world where the people are beyond the pale of the higher religions of the world. But the higher man hates it. and none hates it more than the educated Westerner. Yet, it is an irony of fate and the strangest freak of fortune, that the highest object for which he stands, namely his idealism, the Christian religion, should be shrouded and enmeshed in this horrible and loathsome idea of a savage. That the one and the only religion, which, to him, is the hope of the world and the salvation of

mankind, should be based upon nothing better than the remnant of Fetishism must be really pitiable. But the fact remains and shorn of all the halo of sanctity cast round it by missionary erudition, it is nothing but a relic of barbarism. The feast of the Passover when wine is drunk as the blood and bread is taken as the flesh of Jesus Christ together with the notion of the vicarious atonement, completes the picture of a human sacrifice even now practised by the wild Nagas and Bhils in their dark jungle recesses.

It may be asked : can this vicarious atonement of Christ save mankind ? This of course, is a momentous question and everything towards the determination of a reply depends whether or not this is the will of God. To decide again how far this is or is not the Divine will we have to revert to His Laws as found working in the physical and spiritual worlds. Science has done a good deal to widen the scope of our knowledge in the physical world. The trend of

modern and scientific thought points to the theory that every atom in the universe is subject to two laws the one internal and other external. The internal laws governing an atom refer to that arrangement which it has to follow to keep itself potent as an atom to achieve perfection or its desired end. The atom of a substance or the protoplasm of an animal, though the minutest part a human brain can conceive of, is still a system complete in itself. It follows an internal law and is, to all intents and purposes, a complete picture of the organism of which it is but the smallest part. The protoplasm of a lion is a lion full and complete. It embodies within its small sphere all the distinct qualities and individuality of a lion. Its fierceness, its courage, its inherent attributes³⁶⁴² are all potentially there confined within a narrow compass. Similarly the atoms of all substances in the universe have the distinct qualities of the particular substance of which they form a part. As a matter of

fact every atom is a complete epitome of the universe itself.

This scientific truth teaches us a good deal, and observation makes us believe that the atom has this characteristic only to make the universe evolve out of these infinitesimal worlds existing like islets in the infinite space. Evolution, gradual, slow but sure, is the one law underlying all laws in nature and evolution. nothing but evolution, can be the plan of God. It is undoubtedly the will of God and every atom has been given the potentialities with which it shall be made to carve out its desired end, its predetermined goal. The atom all throughout its long and tedious journey from almost nothingness to perfection works and evolves from within itself. But for this internal life, its progress beyond will be impossible its perfection a mere dream. This internal law working within an atom, is a measure destined to lead to a certain and definite goal. What that goal is, and how far and where it lies, may be beyond

the ken of human knowledge, but reason—the light of God within us—tells us that a goal there certainly is, to which alone, this internal working—this internal energy of an atom, is leading. Like the wheel rotating round its own axis, this system within an atom leads it on to its pre-determined goal.

But this internal activity is only an index to the great activity beyond. The atom is energetic not because it has to lie idle but because it has to undergo greater activities. The whole universe, the whole space, is its field of action. Here comes in the external Law to which the atom is subjected. While continuing its activities within, it has to conform itself to the Great Law without so that it may attain the great goal—its perfection. But for conformity to the Great External Law, the development of an atom would be impossible. How is one atom related to another, how particular groups of them interact with each other? In this consideration

come in the external laws which govern the atoms and help them to form all that we see in Nature and will ever conceivably see.

Thus the two Laws—the one inside the atom and the other outside it—supplement each other to do the great work designed by their Great Maker. These Laws, however, are two only when considered in the light of where they work, inside or outside an atom. Really, however, it is but the one great Law so minute as to penetrate the minutest and so comprehensive as to comprehend the largest. This great Law is one, simultaneously in and out, within and without. This is the great fashioner. But notwithstanding, the Law is not He. It is from Him. It is how He works, how He expresses Himself. He propounds the Law first and through the Law He creates.

Thus it is clear, how the great Law of God finds expression in gradual evolution from within. It is the one method by which God plans the Creation. Consistent to this

basic law man has evolved out of atoms, out of substances. But in being man the atoms have not reached their goal. Where they are half way or where, none can say. Advanced however, they are and that considerably. It may be long long way to Tipperary yet. Much however, has been done, a considerable part of the journey gone over. Much has yet to be traversed. Man is only a stage, a mere measure. He has his capacities, his field of action. But for all that he has to follow the same path, the one great path, chalked out by the atom *i.e.*, the path of evolution. Having come to the stage of man, there can be no reversion, no going back. On and on he must go. Revert, he cannot.

If this be the method, if evolution from within be what must underlie every thing in Creation, the will of God can conceivably be nothing but gradual evolution of man from within. It can be nothing but the slow but sure expression of the latent potentialities of man. If so, man cannot be

supposed to lack the capacity to fulfil this Divine will. He must have the potentialities innate in him to evolve himself from within like the atom. He must be capable to develop fully and freely. There can, therefore, be nothing in man intrinsically counterfeit nothing that can really prevent him from growing. The Christian doctrine of original sin permanently disqualifying man from the capacity of evolution, is therefore against science, against modern ideas. The doctrine of vicarious atonement which seeks to solve the difficulty arising out of the theory of original sin is thus a cure for a no-disease, a fabulous remedy for a fictitious disease. Where is the disease that has to be cured ? There is no essential evil in man, no loadstone of sin to keep him chained down to earth will he nill he, no cancer eating into his vitality, no fell disease to get rid of. He has a pure nature essentially and to purity, he must attain, if he only follows the great Law. All that he lacks is will and all that he wants is obedi-

ence to the laws. Let him will vehemently, obey persistently and act energetically and success and its various epithets, perfection, salvation, self-expression and self-realisation will all be his.

He needs nothing more. He needs no dogma to believe in, no vicarious atonement to save him. Dogma has never saved and never will. At best it is a verbal wrangle and will ever remain so. It has never been and will never be able to catch the whole man. It has always failed to satisfy the great in man, the one thing that counts for much in him—Reason. Can the vicarious atonement then be the will of God ? Can it save man ? If so, it ought to have occurred in the very beginning of the creation of man like the Sun and the Moon, the air and water to afford equal opportunity to all concerned. Where stands then the doctrine of vicarious atonement ?

It may be asked again, how can the vicarious atonement save mankind ? The very term implies a substitute. Is a sub-

titute necessary to save us ? Will a proxy do even here ? Have the ordinary means planned by God failed to achieve their purpose ? Is Evolution no longer operative ? Is Crucifixion of Christ really necessary to save us ? As observed already, man is like a seed, which contains within itself the germ of all the potentialities it is capable of. The seed will not, however, grow into a plant till it works under the proper circumstances. It must have sufficient light, air and water before it can germinate. What then are the proper circumstances—the air, the light and water—under which man should work before he begins to germinate and grow into a shady and fruitful plant ? For man the suitable circumstances must lie, according to the elect of humanity, in right belief and right action. What is the right belief and what the right action is, is a crucial question. It must differ from man to man. It is all a question of insight. The more one sees the greater the distinction, the less one sees the less the difficulties.

Hence the notion of right belief and right action, strictly speaking, must differ from man to man. Just as no two men are physically alike, so no two persons can be mentally or morally quite the same. To man there is no question of absolute right or absolute wrong. It is all a question of relative right or relative wrong.

But for all that, it must be conceded that amidst this multiplicity of difference there are some notions of right and wrong in which mankind as a whole are agreed. Irrespective of the details of what is right or wrong, at least the idea of right is appealing to all men. Therefore, according to common consent, to walk into the path of righteousness is the one circumstance in which the seed of spirituality must germinate and grow. This is the genial soil on which the spirituality of man must develop and ever continue to grow with the guidance of the inner light, which comes to show him the way the moment he reaches one stage, and thus travelling from stage to

stage in the light of an everrecurring light, he is one with the Light itself and loses his temporary egoism in the permanent One.

This idea of walking into the path of righteousness according to one's light is the idea of religion in man. This is innate in him. This is like the latent potentiality of a seed. When this idea of religion is lived upon, the germination begins and real religion commences. Here begins the difference between man and man, nation and nation. The all important question therefore is ; how to translate this idea of religion into practice ? There must be some rules, some examples to guide man in the right path of religion. Man's own light may not suffice. This want is fulfilled in the Law of Revelation. In all ages there have been men who have seen far ahead of their own time and have laid down rules to guide the rest of mankind on the path of practical religion. These men are the prophets and God has spoken to them, not

necessarily as man to man, but surely as spirit to spirit. The Great Spirit has spoken and does even now speak to the spirit in man and reveals laws, obedience to which must lead to the spiritual development of man.

Thus the one outside agent man requires like the seed to set his potentialities into motion and create practical religion in himself is Revelation ; the one method he stands in need of to perfect his religion in practice is obedience to this Revelation and the one sovereign remedy he lacks to cure him of his spiritual ills is the perfection of his religion. Man requires nothing, nothing else. Can the vicarious atonement of Christ be a proper substitute for all this ? Can the mere belief in this dogma really set in motion the religious activities of man ? Can it be the royal remedy to all our spiritual ills ? After all it is a mere belief and no amount of mere belief can do any good to man. Belief is valuable, but in so much only as it serves to stimulate one to virtu-

ous actions. Can the belief in the vicarious atonement ever stimulate man to good actions ? Nay, on the other hand, it tends to make a Christian believe that every thing necessary for his salvation has been already done by Jesus Christ and therefore, all that he needs now, is to believe that Jesus died for the sins of all mankind. As a matter of fact, this is the position taken up by Christians. The whole position therefore is, that rather than stimulating men into right action, this Christian dogma has tended to give a false sense of security and satisfaction to the Christians and instead of making them men, sincerely trying to live up to their light, it has converted them into a set of fellows who may be safely called religious idlers, believing to be fed the morsel of spirituality through the righteousness of Jesus alone. Can such a belief tending to soothe one down to inertia and religious sleep, be supposed to be the true substitute for that life-giving principle of obedience to the laws and the

sincere attempt at perfection, ever trying to see and weed out the defects in one's nature ? Can this belief of a religious idler be compared to the activities of a sincere man trying to live up to his light ? The belief in the vicarious atonement is no stimulant for good actions and therefore it can not save mankind. For salvation it is useless, worse than useless as it stands in the only way of salvation, namely, right belief and right action.

It may again be asked : is this vicarious atonement justified ? Starting from the Christian point of view let us assume that Adam and Eve sinned and therefore all mankind sinned. Man's nature ever since is sinful and hence it is impossible for him to be one with God. With this gulf of impossibility the question is : how to bridge it ? Is the way suggested by Christianity the only one out of the difficulty ? Is the sacrifice of the Lamb of Nazareth the one penance ? Is this human sacrifice so pleasing to God as to make Him forego the sins

of all humanity in return ? Is it the way how the Divine Grace in Christianity acts ? Is this wild notion of appeasing the angry gods with human blood the latest and best method of how God's grace acts ?

Adam and Eve did fall. But could not the mercy of God condone this foolish act ? Was it necessary to take up this revengeful attitude of never-to-forgive ? Does this idea at all correspond with the trumpeted God of love of Christianity ? Does this idea of letting the sins accumulate for ages till innumerable human beings die in sin and are thus relegated to fire, at all harmonise with the Christian claim of being the sole repository of the conception of grace in God ? If the belief in the vicarious atonement is the one granter of salvation the Divine conception in Christianity can hardly be graceful. It is cruel and partial to the extreme. It will thus appear that the vicarious atonement of Christ is not at all justified by any canons of justice, mercy or grace. The very notion itself

depicts a horrible idea of God and is far removed from that Christian popular idea of God of love. Inconsistency can hardly go further. On the one hand we read of that lovely father-like God of Christ (May the blessings of God be on him) and on the other hand we have to believe in that horrible idea of the Deity of the Church.

Is the vicarious atonement necessary ? To this question reason and common sense have but one answer. God does nothing which is against His own Laws. As observed already, this belief tends to subject by far the major portion of mankind to perdition which is against the *idea of God's mercy* : it implies a contradiction against the law of Evolution which is the accepted scientific idea of the age ; it is artificial , it militates against the notion of Divine Justice and Grace : it implies partiality and undue favouritism on the part of God. For all these reasons it must be false and hence, by its very nature, unnecessary for the spiritual development of mankind.

Moreover, even supposing that the belief in the vicarious atonement is necessary to remove the inherent sin of man, does it follow that a Christian who believes so, has no sin left in him ? Can he honestly believe this ? Can he honestly say that the very tendency towards sin has been wiped off from his nature ? Is he incapable of doing sin ? If not, and if sin is still in him and he is still inclined to commit sin what about the efficacy of this belief ? What about the solution of the great problem of the removal of the causes of the inherent sin for which this belief in the vicarious atonement of Christ was conceived and deemed necessary ? If the poor Christian continues a sinner—and that he remains, as he knows in his heart of hearts—in spite of his belief in this doctrine, how can the poor sinner approach the Holy God ? Alas ! again the same original difficulty for which this doctrine was conceived, faces him. How now to bridge this gulf, between the Holy God and the

sinful creature ? The bridge of the vicarious atonement has given way and crumbled, what logic to think of now ? All this clearly demonstrates the utter hollowness of this doctrine. There can be absolutely no truth in it from any point of view. Yet, it is the irony of fate that this doctrine should establish itself in regions which are the abode of the so-called supermen. This is the belief to which the West would convert the East, specially the Muslims !!

After all, why lay so much emphasis on this belief ? Does it rest on the direct sayings and teachings of Christ ? If so, where are these preachings recorded ? Let Christians refer to St. Matthew : chapter 5 verses 16 and 17. There says Christ :—

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

Here Jesus is clearly emphasising upon good work and belief in God. He impresses upon his apostles the importance of the law, which was already there. He wants them to remember that Jesus was sent not to destroy but to fulfil the law established by the prophets. How can the Mosaic law be fulfilled by this novel belief never taught by Moses or any of the prophets? Jesus clearly meant his followers to follow the Jewish practice in religion. Moreover, Jesus had not even the idea of his crucifixion when he made the above statement. How could he then be expected at least, on this occasion to teach the belief in the doctrine of vicarious atonement? To Jesus nothing but belief in God and a sincere move in the right direction was the only factor of salvation to mankind and that alone he taught in the above verses. If he really believed in this doctrine nothing on earth could be expected to have deterred him from clearly emphasising this point. Since he did not even mention this, there can be

but only one conclusion that Christ never taught this novel doctrine, unique in the system of theology.

Jesus makes himself very clear in verses 19—20 of the same chapter of St. Matthew which run thus :—

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”.

It is a pity indeed that in face of the above clear and unequivocal statement of their Master, the Christians could still afford to divorce action almost altogether. According to Christ the great in the kingdom of heaven is he who preaches and practises the law, and unless the righteousness of the Christians surpasses the

righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (*i. e.* the Non-Christians) they shall, in no case, enter the kingdom of heaven. Yet a Christian can afford to be a religious idler ! This is how he follows his Master's teachings ! To Christ, as to all prophets of God, there is no royal road to salvation and this is what Christ has most emphatically preached in the above verses. Right belief and right action to Christ as to all prophets is the one road to salvation and that road is what he wanted to show to his followers. But this is too hard for a Christian. He must have a royal road to run his car of vicarious atonement. Personal efforts are too much for him and he must have some one to carry his burden. He must make Christ his burden-bearer even if the same Christ in clear and unequivocal language teaches him that in religion there can be no such cooly. No gold on earth can buy spirituality and no amount of belief can really convert a prophet of God into a lamb to be sacrificed for the expiation of

the sins of mankind. God's Providence has not created either this gold or this lamb. The Christian, of course, must buy one to leave him free for the enough that he has to do in this world in the way of his enjoyment of life.

Then again Christ taught his disciples to ask forgiveness for their sins from the Father in heaven. If Jesus was conscious of his crucifixion on the cross and if he knew that this crucifixion was to atone for the sins of mankind, why this teaching for prayer for forgiveness of sins from the Father in heaven? If Jesus was conscious of this great fact—the central doctrine of the Church—namely that the Father had promised to him to forgive the sins of mankind in atonement of his crucifixion, what on earth could have deterred him from publicly and boldly proclaiming this truth? If to Jesus it were the command of God what could have kept him back from stating it directly and unequivocally that all mankind must believe in his

vicarious atonement, if they were to have salvation ? Can the Christian fathers quote any single verse in the gospel referring to any positive sayings of Jesus directly bearing on this point and lending colour to this belief ?

Perhaps they would refer us to verses 26—28 Chapter 26 of St. Matthew which run thus :—

26. *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat : this is my body.*

27. *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ;*

28. *“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”.*

Those verses record the sayings of Jesus when, according to the Gospel narrative, Jesus was conscious of his coming betrayal and end. And when he offered the bread and the cup to his disciples and asked them

to eat and drink he simply meant this humble feast to be his last memorial on earth to them. He asked them to drink that cup as if that cup contained his blood, which was about to be shed for them and for many. This offer of the cup to his disciples was Christ's last covenant with them to continue his great work after him. It was the symbol of the great pledge into which he entered with his disciples. It was the last reminder of Jesus to them of the fact that he came with a mission from God to reclaim the lost sheep of Israel but unfortunately that sheep was too degenerate and fallen to accept him. Nay that very sheep was about to shed his blood. Yet his very death will be helpful to many and, many will believe in him in spite of the crucifixion. Such believers will live the right sort of life and will hence be reclaimed. Thus like all the great teachers of humanity, Jesus even after his death will be greater and the memory of his sufferings at the hands of

the naughty Jews will serve to kindle the light of faith in many hearts. All these sincere workers in the field would yet achieve much and bring many to the fold. Jesus's death was in this way to prove a source of redemption to many and hence his blood was truly shed for the redemption of many.

There is nothing extra-ordinary in this and the blood of many has been shed by the wicked. Many prophets of God have met death in their attempt to reclaim the people to whom they were sent. But their death was never in vain and by no means marked the end of their principles. Men die indeed but principles are immortal and live for ever. They continue to attract people and through many sincere workers slowly but surely reclaim many. This is true of all great men. Great men are like seeds, which die out only to bring forth the tree to bear abundant fruit. Jesus was conscious of this fact and therefore, he said that his blood would be shed for

many. But "for many" does not imply literal substitute as the Christians have wrongly interpreted. Here again the fault lies with the interpretation and not with the teachings of Christ. And no body has greater hand in this interpretation than St. Paul and after him the early Greek fathers as will be shown hereafter.

It will appear from what has been quoted from the Gospels that the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement of Christ can not be based upon any direct and unequivocal teaching of Christ even as recorded in the adulterated Bible. Is it not then really strange that the Church theology should be based upon a doctrine, which can not be reasonably traced to the direct teachings of the Master? Yet the educated masses of the West can not learn to think for themselves in matters which most vitally concern them! They can afford to be fed by the spoon only in religious matters. Let them remember that those fed on the spoon are invalids and as such can not

claim to be really healthy in religious matters like the Muslims, who, ever since the advent of the great Arabian have learnt the use of sterling common sense and individual judgment even in religious matters.

Thus far it has been a case of the Vicarious Atonement against reason and the direct teachings of Christ himself. It would be interesting to know what has Islam to say, on this point? What has that religion, which to a Christian, is the very negation of religion, to say here? What has that Holy Book of Islam, which a Christian thinks is full of absurd stories to teach on the subject? The following verses may be considered :

"Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent, of its ability ; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned, and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought"
(The cow 286.)

" * * * And no soul earns (evil) but against itself, and no bearer of burden*

*shall bear the burden of another ; * * **

(The cattle 165.)

Since Allah is not too exacting, every man is to depend upon his own self. He has to work out his own salvation. The QUR-AN issues no passport to heaven like the belief in the Vicarious Atonement and raises no fond hope of salvation at others' expense. "No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another" is a death knoll to all such extravagant hopes. Islam impresses upon man his own accountability, his personal responsibility for all that he does. It is his legs alone that must carry him. He can not afford to be carried on the shoulders of others. He must disillusion himself of this false but fond notion. He must take life seriously and, in all things in life he must try to be sincere to the extent of his ability. He must do his part and God will undoubtedly do His. He must follow the right up to his own light and leave the consequences to God, who is indeed Merciful. The mission of man is

nothing but to follow the right which the Holy Book thus defines :—

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the way-farer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil)” The Cow 177.

The above is the true picture of a Muslim's conception of righteousness. Mark the principles it embodies. These are :—

(1) Righteousness does not consist in turning faces towards the East and the West i. e. in mere conventionalities.

Belief in:—

(2) Allah; (3) the last day when man will be fully rewarded or punished; (4) the Angels; (5) the book i. e. in the revelation from God; (6) the prophets—not the prophet Muhammad alone but in all prophets of the world as has been taught in various other verses of the Holy Book.

Principles of action:—

(7) Charity; (8) Prayer; (9) Being true to one's promise; (10) Patience in distress.

Is not the above a complete picture of a perfect man? Is it not the practical description of a man whom the whole world would like? What more could we want? If we simply follow the above principles can not we be the man after God? Thus all that Islam teaches is to stick to these practical principles and leave the rest to God and all else will follow automatically. Islam, therefore, takes religion as principles of action primarily. Religion not lived is a religion lost. Mere belief is like the potentialities of a seed, but the seed will

produce no fruitful plant till it germinates and evolves itself practically in the soil taking actively what it wants and rejecting what it does not. Islam therefore makes salvation depend upon action and not on mere belief like Christianity. To Islam salvation is self-expression, self-realisation and there can be no possible expression and realisation of the self till it practically evolves like the seed. Mere belief won't help. Hence the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement to Islam is unnatural and the belief in it equally valueless. Such belief helps us not a jot. Right belief and good act is, in a nut-shell the spirit of Islam.

This is what has emanated from the much reviled and the so called "Dreamer of the desert". What is the essential and the first principle of the Religion of Civilisation—the self-styled one ideal religion of the world—has been discussed and stated already. Perhaps it requires no comment from a mortal's pen to establish the superiority of the one over the other. The

Divine pen has already done that in verse 177 of the Cow quoted above. It is conspicuous as the Sun, yet it is an irony of fate indeed! that the Christian Church has left and leaves no stone unturned to vilify Islam, and when all its efforts at the conversion of the Muslims are shattered to pieces on this solid rock and sturdy common sense of Islam, it turns only to curse and simply explains this Muslim pertinacity away as the triumph of the Devil!! Sir William Muir bewails that Islam has hindered the spread of Christianity in the East. Another Christian writer says:—*

“Muhammad in his own age and country was the greatest of reformers—a reformer alike religious, moral and political.....But when his system passed the borders of the land in which it was so great a reform, it became the *greatest of curses to mankind*. The main cause which has made the religion of

* British Quarterly Review, January 1872, Pages 132-134
Quoted by P. Bosworth Smith, M. A., in his *Mohammad an' Mohammadanism* page 278.

Muhammad exercise so blighting an influence on every land where it has been preached, is because it is an imperfect system standing in the way of one more perfect. Islam has just enough good to hinder the reception of greater good. Because Islam comes nearer to Christianity than any other false system, because it comes nearer than any other to satisfying the wants of man's spiritual nature, for that very reason it is, above all other false systems, pre-eminently anti-Christian. It is, as 't were, the personal enemy and rival of the faith, disputing on equal terms for the same prize!!"

If Islam has enough of good in it and if Muhammad was the greatest of reformers—a reformer alike religious, moral and political, it must, of course, require the brain of a bigot Christian alone to call it in the same breath the greatest curse to humanity. Fortunately all Christians are not alike and Mr. R. Bosworth Smith refutes the above charge in the following words :—

“Upon what single fact then, either before or after Mohammed’s time, does the writer ground this charge? If the purest Christianity of all, preached by Christ and His Apostles, did not make way in the Eastern world; if the far Christian Churches which did exist among the half Roman or Hellenic inhabitants of Syria and of Africa had sunk to the condition in which we know they were when Mohammedanism swept them away, what reason have we, either *a priori* or *a posteriori*, for supposing that the Christianity of any later time would have been more successful? Have Christian nations been so energetic or so successful in converting any of those African or Asiatic nations which Mohammedanism has never reached, as to entitle us to turn round upon the religion which has remoulded so large a portion of the human race, and tell it that it is a curse to humanity because, for-sooth, while we admit it was in its time a grand forward movement and has been a higher life to

untold millions since, we wish that Fetish worship should have lasted on perhaps till now, that Christianity may now have the chance of doing the work better ? If this is Christianity I only say most certainly it is not of the spirit of Him who said that those who were not against Him were with Him ; and rejoiced that good was done by others, even if it seemed in infringement of His own Divine Commission * * *

The only monopoly of good that Christianity, if it is of the spirit of its Founder, may claim, is the monopoly not of doing good, but of rejoicing at it whenever it is done, and whoever does it ; of showing, if it carries out its Founder's intentions, that it is wide enough to recognise as its own and to embrace within its ample bosom all honest "Seekers after God" and all true benefactors of humanity. The most "anti-Christian" religion is not that which comes nearest to Christianity, but that which is furthest removed from it ; and the religion which after Christianity comes nearest to

“satisfying the wants of man’s spiritual nature” is really not its most deadly enemy, but its best ally. To say otherwise, liberal and tolerant as the author unquestionably is, is to encourage weaker men under shadow of his name, not merely to indulge in the *Odium theologicum*, but to assert that the *Odium theologicum* itself is Christian” (pages 279—81).

With such a view as that of Islam contrasted with the Christian theory of Vicarious Atonement, it is really very strange to a Muslim how at all the educated men of the West can afford to subscribe themselves to this central belief of the religion of the Church. How can educated men justify this most irrational belief ? Nothing demonstrates the evil power of prejudice more forcibly than the Christian blindness to see the hollowness of this doctrine of theirs. Let Europeans and Christian writers rest assured that unless they can present some thing higher than that taught by Islam on this topic to expect any impression on the Muslim

mind is a vain hope for them. To think that this doctrine of Vicarious Atonement can ever appeal to a Muslim in face of the rational teachings of Islam, is to imagine that the mirage in the desert is water indeed. Let the Christians see this defect of theirs. Let them remember this central doctrine of the Church and reflect how infinitely superior is the teaching of Islam in this respect. Let them be fair-minded and they can see. Does the superiority of Christianity lie in this doctrine.

CHAPTER III.

The Doctrine of Sonship of Jesus Christ.

We have seen in the foregoing chapters how the Christian doctrines of the Original Sin and consequent Vicarious Atonement are unscientific and unnatural and how the weight of the best opinion of the age is on the side of Islam. We have seen how the theory of evolution is in agreement with the findings of Islam. Finally we have seen how reason—the one thing in man which counts for much—has its full support on the side of Islam rather than on the side of Christianity. Let us now proceed to consider the other great Christian doctrine which makes the division between Islam and Christianity most marked and which for ever separates a Muslim from his Christian brother. The gulf is unbridgeable. This is the doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus.

What do the Christians mean when they

say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ? There can be only three possible meanings. Jesus is either the Son of God physically in the sense one man is the son of another man or morally or essentially, that is, proceeding from the same essence as God. The idea of a physical Son to God is too anthropomorphic and hence inconceivable. It must be dismissed at once. Is Jesus the Son of God morally ? There can be no objection to this statement. As a matter of fact every man—nay every atom—is the Son of God morally. Whoever and whatever is a creature has a relation with the Creator. He is the Father of all. Everything is His product, His creation and hence all are morally His Sons. God's Fatherhood contains the space and all that is in the space is the Son, as a necessary corollary to this idea of the Divine Fatherhood. But this is all.

Is Jesus the son of God essentially ? Does he proceed from the same essence as God ? This is the real question. To begin

with, we must understand the Christian position. In the Church theology Christ is the Son and the 2nd person of the God-head and although, he has a separate personality from the Father, he is one with the Father as regards the essence. Thus the Christian God-head comprises three persons as regards individuality but as regards the essence it is one only. This tantamounts to saying that in Christianity even the essence of the God-head is not unique because three persons proceed from it. Christians therefore can not consistently say that God is unique in His Person and His Essence. Moreover since the Son has a distinct individuality he must have at least some attributes different from both the Father and the Holy Ghost, otherwise a separate individuality is unthinkable. The Christian God-head must therefore have three distinct sets of attribute for the three distinct personalities. The Christian God can not therefore be unique even in His Attributes. Thus the necessary corollary of the Son-

ship is that God, according to Christianity, is not unique either in His Person, His Essence or His Attributes.

Is this position tenable? Is not uniqueness of the God-head the one attribute emphasised by all the great religions, the great prophets and the great men of the world in all lands and ages? Does not even the human reason say that in human phraseology the one term best suited to give an idea of the Absolute is unique? Do not even the Christians say that God is unique? But have the Christians gone deep into the matter and found out for themselves this incongruity in their belief as a logical consequence of the Sonship of Jesus? The whole thing is thus placed between the horns of a dilemma. If Jesus is the Son of God, God is not unique and if God is unique Jesus is not the Son of God. On which side of the horns the Christians would like to sit? Let them consider. But the position is truly dangerous. Either the most important attribute of God must be sacri-

ficed for Christ, the Son or the Son must be sacrificed for the perfection of God. It is however for the Christians to choose. All men in the world would, of course, go the way of God.

As the Son is the second person of the God-head, he must be eternal. The Father is also eternal. This implies that the Father and the Son lived simultaneously, which is impossible. Here again a Christian is faced with the same dilemma. Should he side with the Father or with the Son? If the Father is to remain eternal the Son can not be eternal, if however, the Son is to be eternal, the Father must be something other than eternal. This again is impossible. Let a Christian think. Which side would he choose? If like the rest of mankind, he would side with the Father, the Son is sacrificed and automatically becomes non-eternal. If so, he can not come out of the Divine Essence, which is eternal. Jesus can not therefore be the Son of God essentially.

Man has Sons to multiply the population and to be the heir after the father's death. There can be no such purpose with God because neither can He be multiplied nor can He die. Why should God then have a Son? Can the Christians conceive of any purpose? Was it for the purpose of the Crucifixion on the Cross to redeem the sins of mankind? If so, can the Christians positively say that God cares most for the inhabitants of this world alone? What about the creatures scattered all throughout the space? Who knows that among these creatures there may not be beings more worthy of regard than man? But to assert that God sent His only Son to be crucified down on this earth is to directly presume that in God's creation there is nothing better than man as he is here on this earth. This is too big a presumption to be safe. This is giving undue importance to the inhabitants of this earth to the exclusion of those of the rest of the space. This is too much of human egotism.

God undoubtedly cares for man. But God's care consists in His beneficence and Providence and in His giving every creature the capacity with which to evolve from within. His care for man does not consist in sending an outside agent to be sacrificed for man to save him. The Son is therefore unnecessary for the salvation of man. He need not be crucified. All that has to be crucified for man for his salvation is already within man, the animal in him. It is this animal that has to be sacrificed if man is to get rid of his lower nature. The great killer that will sacrifice this animal in man is already there within him and that is what is popularly called conscience. What more is needed? The animal is there, the sacrificer is there. What need there is then for the only Son? If therefore the Son is to save mankind he is not.

Muslims shudder at the very idea of a Son being ascribed to Him. Says the Holy Quran:--

1. *"Say : He Allah, is one.*

2. *Allah is He on Whom all depend.*
3. *He begets not, nor is He begotten.*
4. *And none is like Him—"The unity :*

As Allah is like nothing and as all depend upon Him, He can neither beget nor can He be begotten. It has been wrongly supposed by R. Bosworth Smith in his "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" on pages 275—76 at the initiation of one Dr. G. P. Badger that this refutation of the Fatherhood of God refers only to the physical side of the question. As an author on Islam, he ought to have known that Islam conceives of a God who is unique in His Essence, His Person and His Attributes. As such there can be no room in the Islamic God-head for an essential Son in the Christian sense. Dr. Badger's attempt to base the doctrine of an essential Sonship on the Quranic term "Word of God" applied for Jesus is equally fruitless. For says the Holy Quran elsewhere.

"Say : If the Sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the Sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are

exhausted, though we were to bring the like of that (Sea) to add thereto”,—

(The cave, 109.)

Mark how numerous are the words of Allah. Even if the Sea were the ink His words can not be written. If Dr. Badger is willing to assert that the term “Word of God” refers to the essential Sonship, he must be prepared to agree with the findings of the Holy Quran when it makes such Sons innumerable. As a matter of fact, the term “Word of God” signifies a creature and nothing else. It is curious that eminent Christian Doctors should take so much pains in quoting from the Holy Quran and should be so ingenious in the interpretation thereof in support of the Sonship but should totally ignore the plain and decisive findings of the Holy Book on the same topic. Says the Holy Quran :—

“The Messiah, Son of Mary, is but an apostle, apostles before him have indeed passed away ; and his mother was a truthful

woman ; they both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away—The food, 75.

“Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of” Adam ; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was.— (The Family of Amran ; 58).

To any one the above verses read with the statement “He begets not, nor is He begotten” will make the whole position as clear as possible. But Christians like Dr. Badger will only opine and try to twist out favourable meaning for their guess. The blind will not see and the deaf will not hear.

The Christians have, however, already begun to see in spite of Dr. Badger, and, the time is not far distant when the Christian world itself would shudder at the idea of the Sonship as the Muslim world does ever since the advent of the Great Arabian. That the Church is realising its blunder even now, and that the consciousness of this great moral wrong is dawning

already over the benighted Church, is apparent from the recent speech of a great Christian Divine on a memorable occasion when the Christian fathers met at Cambridge in England in the summer of 1921.

"There was" said Dr. Rashdall the Dean of Carlisle "a growing demand that liberal theologians should say in quite definite terms what they really meant when they used the traditional language about Divinity of Christ. Dealing first with the negative side of the proposition, Dr. Rashdall said Jesus did not claim Divinity for Himself.

He may have called Himself, or more probably allowed Himself to be called the Messiah or Son of God, but never in any critically, well-attested sayings was there anything suggesting that His conscious relation to God was other than that of a man toward God—the attitude which He wished that all men should adopt.

It obviously followed from that admission that Jesus was in the fullest sense a man ; that He had not merely a human

body, but a human soul, intellect and will.

That was not always recognised by the Church. Many of the early Greek fathers—Irenaeus, for instance, and Athanasius—obviously thought of Him simply as the Logos of God residing in a human body. Later Councils condemned this position in the person of Apollinarius.

From the point of view of later theology it could not be too strongly asserted that Athanasius was an Apollinarian.

And (added the Dean) I fear a great many people now, who think themselves particularly orthodox, are really Apollinarians, too. I have known quite advanced Catholics who simply did not know that the Church teaches that Christ had a human soul. Much so-called orthodoxy is really Apollinarianism, and some defenders of the Catholic faith, who are too well informed to become downright Apollinarians, are really under the influence of that heresy in the later reduced form of it, which denied that Christ had a human will.

It was equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There was simply no basis for such a doctrine, and from the time when the Logos Christology was accepted by the Church, it had been held that what pre-existed was the Divine Logos—not the human Jesus,

* * * *

If we believe that every human soul reveals, produces, incarnates God to some extent, if we believe that in the great ethical teachers of mankind, the great religious personalities, the founders, the reformers of all religions, God is more fully revealed than in other men, then it became possible to believe that in one man the self-relation of God had been signal, supreme, unique, that we are justified in thinking of God as like Christ, that the character and teaching of Christ contains the fullest disclosure both of the Character of God Himself and of His will for man”

“Daily Graphic, August 22nd 1921 Quoted
in Islamic Review for April, 1922”.

The above is too clear to need any comment. Jesus Christ is now from later theology point of view supposed to be in the fullest sense a man. He has a human soul and a human will and his relation to God is that of a man to God and nothing else. And if he had a divinity it was the divinity in man more fully developed than in any other man. In short, he was divine to the extent a perfect man is divine or, in other words he was a perfect man. This disposes of with the divinity of Jesus, which has always been a bone of contention among the Christians and over which the Church authorities have spilt much ink and wasted much energy. It also directly does away with the essential Sonship of Jesus, because if the Son is not essentially God-like but manlike he can not proceed out of the same essence as the Father.

But the Dean further says that Jesus did not claim divinity for himself. He simply called himself the Messiah or the Son of God or allowed himself to be so called. This

is a very important statement. It is tantamount to saying that to claim the Messiahship was not to claim divinity. This is indeed the truth. But all the Christians have neither the mentality nor the courage of the Dean. For the benefit of such Christians and it is by far the great majority, let us hold out the torch of history and see how the doctrine of Sonship of Jesus developed and what is the true meaning of it.

The whole trend of the New Testament is to prove that Jesus was a puritan Jew as regards his religion. He was born and brought up a Jew. He was well-versed in the Old Testament and even at an early age he would enter into discussion on religious matters with the Jewish Rabbies. When Jesus came of age he was thoroughly imbued with the true spirit of the Old Testament and to him, as to none else then, the contrast between the Jewish practice and Jewish preaching was striking. He therefore raised his voice against the Jewish hypocrisy and in bitter terms he denounced

them for their observance of the mere letter at the expense of the spirit of the law. He wanted the Israelites back to the law of Moses in spirit. He wanted them back to the old laws, the laws of the prophets. He did not want to destroy these laws. In his own terms he came to fulfil the laws and up to his very last, he emphasised this point of view. Nothing more is needed to prove that the religion of Jesus was that of a puritan Jew. He simply meant to reform Judaism not so much by drastic changes or innovations as by bringing the Jews back to the pristine purity of their ancient faith.

It is well to remember this great fact in the life of Jesus (on whom be peace and blessings of God.) It will help us to solve many a mystery in the Church theology. It will really prove the cutting of the Gordian knots of the Christian theology. It is, of course, a truism to assert that Jesus was intensely religious. Religion was the one fire that consumed him night

and day. He thought religion, he talked religion and he lived religion like all the great prophets of the Lord. His religion was the spirit of the religion of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament Israel was the son of God even His first born. Melchisedec was a son of God. As a matter of fact all pious men, nay, even ordinary Israelites were the sons of God. According to a Christian theologian "we find God conceived as the Father of Israel (Hosea Xi-1) of the pious in Israel * (Isaiah (Lxiii-16) and of individuals (Ps Lxviii-5)". The notion of the "Son of God" was thus familiar enough in the Old Testament. To the Jews it was nothing new. It was as old as the hills. There was nothing extra-ordinary in this. It did not, in the sense given to the term "Son of God" in the Old Testament, militate against the rigid monotheism of the Jews. It was always used in the moral sense except in the case of the prophet Ezra.

* Christ's Message of the Kingdom by A.G. Hogg, M.A.
Page 146.

Let us remember this important fact. Now there is a puritan Jew bent upon reforming Judaism as he himself says. Such a Jew calls himself, let us suppose, "the Son of God" and at the same breath also "the Son of Man". What would reason and common sense expect to be the meaning of the term "Son of God" in the mouth of this puritan Jew. It will be hardly fair to suppose that the latter gave the term "Son of God" a meaning quite unique and unprecedented in the theology of his creed and community, specially when the same man calls himself the "Son of Man" as well. To suppose so is a mere guess, a theory. The puritan Jew is Jesus and it is he in whose mouth the New Testament puts the terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man". Can it be reasonably supposed that Jesus called himself the Son of God in any sense other than that of the old Testament with which notion he was already familiar ?

Even admitting for the sake of argument that Jesus did attach new meaning to

the term "Son of God" let us see where is the proof of all this? Is there a single verse in the New Testament that directly and unequivocally lends colour to this supposition? Let the Christian fathers come up with any such verse. On the other hand there is a definite and conclusive proof in the N. T. itself that Jesus did not call himself the *Son of God* in the sense attached to the term by the Christians. He simply called himself the "*Son of God*" morally in the sense of the O. T.. Jesus did not monopolise to himself the use of the term "Father" for God. He always taught his followers to address God in the same term. As a matter of fact, every Christian addresses God as the "Father in Heaven". This is a conclusive and most convincing proof of the fact that Jesus did not give the term "Son of God" any new meaning. Had he done so, he would have monopolised the use of the term "Father". But this he did not do. It therefore follows, as a necessary sequel to this, that, to Jesus, there was

nothing new in the use of the terms "Father" and "Son of God". Had there been anything new, Jesus would have told so. But he never said so. He never forbade his followers the use of the term *Father*.

Thus the actual position is this:—In the New Testament we find the terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man" put into the mouth of Jesus in the same breath. But the precedent shows that Jesus was a puritan Jew thoroughly versed in the teachings of of the O. T. where the notion of the "Son of God" is quite a common place thing in the moral sense. The New Testament leaves the thing doubtful. Beyond recording these terms it says nothing definite to support the Christian meaning. On the other hand the moral meaning of the term is supported by the antecedent in the O. T., by the circumstances of Jesus being a puritan Jew and by the New Testament itself as already shewn. Under the circumstances to take Jesus as the *Son of God* morally, is not only reasonable but the only thing natural. To

regard Jesus so, makes everything of the Church reasonable. It removes all the so-called mysteries. For if Jesus becomes the "Son of God" morally, he automatically becomes a prophet to which no body can object. From the prophethood of Jesus would follow the salvation of mankind through prophets i. e. Revelation. From this latter proposition would follow the need of personal efforts at reform on the part of man. This again will obviate the necessity of the Vicarious Atonement and the disappearance of the Vicarious Atonement will imply the undoing of the doctrine of the Original Sin. Thus all the Christian doctrines from the Original Sin of mankind down to the Blessed Trinity, will disappear, and then in Christianity there will be no dogmas but rational principles.

It is unthinkable what has kept the Church back from such a rational belief, which is most naturally and easily inferred from the statements recorded in the Bible itself as shewn above. Just imagine how

a wrong interpretation at the very outset has made everything in the Church a guess work. How the unnatural interpretation of the term *Son of God* has necessitated all the Christian dogmas from the Original Sin of man down to the doctrine of the Trinity. How a mere interpretation of one man notably and after him that of his immediate successors, has changed the whole aspect of the teachings of Christ. How all this happened let us see.

To be able to see these things clearly we must consider three things. Firstly, we must consider the circumstances prevailing in the period between the crucifixion of Christ and the time when the teachings of Jesus were reduced to writing. Secondly, we must consider the fact that the Hebrew Gospel, if any, was, for the first time, translated into Greek and, thirdly and finally, we must consider the fact that the innumerable councils which the Christians held to determine their cult, had mainly to do with Christology i. e. the nature and personality of Christ rather than with his teachings.

The Crucifixion of Christ and after till the Gospels are recorded.

It is a commonly admitted fact that the teachings of Jesus were not reduced to writing in his life time. Neither are there any contemporary records of the events of his life. As a matter of fact, historically Christ is dead. As appears, however, from the Gospels, Jesus was in the habit of preaching to people in parables, which made it difficult for them to understand his true meaning. Even his disciples found it extremely difficult to understand him and Jesus often blamed them for their lack of intelligence. Things continued in this way till the Master was no more on earth.

The Gospel narrative makes it extremely clear that the time in which Jesus happened to come was a time of gross superstition. Palestine was immersed in ignorance. People of all classes were extremely superstitious. Belief in evil spirits—the essence of Fetishism—was prevalent among the high

and the low alike. As a matter of fact, the great part of the time of Jesus as recorded in the N. T., was occupied in casting out devils, which possessed not only men, women and children but even swines. The devils were supreme in Palestine then and they made free havoc among all classes of people. Many came to Jesus to be relieved of the tyranny of Be-el-Zebub, the prince of the devils. Thus one of the main reasons why the masses came to Jesus was to be rid of this devilry. Of the prophets of the world, none had so busy a time with the devils as had Jesus according to the Gospel story. This is a conclusive proof of the dark age in which Jesus lived.

Such is the age when Jesus comes and such are the people whom Jesus has to reclaim. Jesus chooses his disciples. These are twelve in number, namely (1) Simon called also Peter; (2) Andrew his brother; (3) James the Son of Zebedee; (4) John the brother of James; (5) Philip; (6) Bartholomew; (7) Thomas; (8) Matthew the publi-

can; (9) James the son of Alphæus; (10) Lebboeus surnamed Thaddoeus; (11) Simon the Canaanite and (12) Judas Iscariot. Of these 12 the first four are fishermen and the chief disciples of Jesus. Others are all people from the rank and file excepting Matthew, who is a clerk. These people coming out of the lowest order of society, are naturally ignorant and superstitious. Education they have none. In the eye of the Master, however, Peter was the best as is apparent from verses 16-19 of Chapter 16 of St. Matthew. "*Thou art Pater, and upon this rock I will build my Church*" says Christ. The incident of the Garden recorded in verses 36-38 of Chapter 26 of St. Matthew shows that Jesus confided in Peter and the two Sons of Zebedee, James and John, above all the rest. Thus these three disciples were the most trusted by Jesus and were the best of the lot.

On the crucifixion of Christ the sole repository of his teachings were these people. It will be, therefore, worthwhile

to scrutinise into their conduct in order to be able to know the nature of the only source from which the teachings of Jesus have filtered down to us. Had Christ, like Muhammad, taken care to see that his teachings were recorded in writing in his own life time, and had such a record been available for our perusal like the Holy Quran, we could have easily dispensed with this trouble of examining the character of the disciples of Jesus. But, unfortunately, the case is quite different and the only source through which the teachings of Jesus were handed down to posterity, is the oral report by these disciples of Jesus. Their memory and their intelligence in grasping the true spirit of the Master's teachings, are the only basis from which Christianity with all its mysteries, has sprung and, it is therefore, extremely important to be sure that this lonely source is not in any way counterfeit or unreliable.

Let us now turn to the New Testament and seek for materials to enable us to con-

duct the desired scrutiny. In the first place, let us remember the grand miracles performed by Jesus as recorded in the Bible. For the benefit of the readers let us state how Jesus raised the dead to life ; how he healed the sick and cleansed the lepers ; how he cast out devils ; how he fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes. All these miracles were witnessed by the disciples of Jesus. Peter, James and John, however, were shewn further miracles of the "Transfiguration" when Jesus took them on to the top of a high mountain, "*And was transfigured before them ; and his face did shine as the Sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*"

"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

"Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here ; if thou wilt. let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold a

voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

“And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid”--
Verses 2-6 Chapter 17, St. Matthew :

Such were the miracles witnessed by the disciples of Jesus according to the Gospel narrative. No such miracles are recorded of any other prophet in the world. Let us believe it is all true. Now the question is : is there a man in all the world, howsoever depraved he may be, who would fail to bow down to such a spiritual Sun ! Is there a man who would not sacrifice his all, his very life for the least service to this picture of an embodied spirituality ? It may be difficult to believe in miracles. Nay, to some it may be even impossible to believe in miracles on the mere talk of them. But lives there a man, even in this sceptical age, who would not at once believe in miracles after personally witnessing them ? Is there a man who will not be at once conquered by

the magic wand of such a spiritual magnet ?

It is impossible to deny. Yet, according to the same Gospel narrative, the impossible happened ! Jesus, own disciple, Judas Iscariot betrays him to the enemy for 30 pieces of silver. His chiefest disciple, Peter on whom Christ was to build his Church, denies him thrice and all flee for their lives when the Master is betrayed !! Ah ! such a Master and such traitors ! Such a spiritual Magnet and such mean cowards !! Fallen as man is, never was he more unworthy of Adam ; never was he more degrading to humanity and never was he viler before God than on that unlucky day !! Never could life have been more fittingly sacrificed ; never could men have died nobler than on that day ! Never could the sword have been more fitly drawn, or in face of the impotency of the sword, never could martyrdom have been more honourably purchased than dying that day with such a Master clasping his hallowed feet !

Is there in human phraseology any term strong enough to denounce adequately the conduct of the disciples of Jesus ? Can such people be at all spiritual ? Can such people, to whom no miracles could induce to believe in Jesus so firmly as to be ready to throw their lives for him, be at all called believers ? Can such men be at all men ? Can there be men like them ? Search the histories of the immediate disciples of all great men, nay even the followers of men spiritually most ordinary, you can hardly find a match for these people. If cowardice can be unique, treason unparalleled it is here. But is it possible ? Were not these immediate disciples of Jesus men ? Nay, were they not religious men ? Had they not sacrificed their all and only followed the Master according to the same Gospel ? Can such men be capable of such cowardice, such faithlessness and such treason ? They may be, but it is inconceivable. This is too great a contradiction for faith and no amount of justification can undo this blot.

It is really the horns of a dilemma. If we are to believe in the Bible narrative regarding the conduct of the disciples, the personality of Jesus becomes too weak, and if we are to believe in the great miracles and magnetic personality of Jesus the conduct of the disciples, as narrated in the Bible, becomes incredible. These two aspects are contradictory and can not both be conceivably true at one and the same time. The former can not be false according to the Christians at least, the latter must therefore be false. If so, it is an internal evidence of the unreliability of the Gospel narrative.

Christians, however, have to accept the whole story as true. If so, the disciples of Jesus prove to be men of no character at all. Can we then depend upon such people ignorant, superstitious and faithless for the true dispensation of Christ's teachings ? Can our conscience allow us to be satisfied with the reliability of this only source ? Moreover it is not even these disciples who

wrote the Gospel. For at least seventy years after the crucifixion of Christ, his teachings remained in the fluid state. In the meantime superstition was gaining ground daily. The story of the resurrection of Christ three days after his death on the cross together with all the fanciful stories, that began to be told of him, added fuel to the fire, and the process of fancy and imagination fed by the spirit of wonder in all things about Christ, went apace till the personality of Jesus, and not his teachings, became the one theme for discussion among his followers. Thus was created Christology which has radically changed the original teachings of Christ.

Is it possible under such circumstances to assert with a clean conscience that the Gospels reliably record the real teachings of Christ ? Were not these teachings adulterated with the personal views of the immediate disciples of Christ and their immediate followers ? Who can be positive under such a quagmire of doubts ? If once the

possibility of doubt is admitted, how can any body take the Gospel teachings as infallible and absolutely reliable ? If this absolute reliability is not guaranteed, how can Christians safely afford to take their stand on the mere Gospel narratives for their essential beliefs specially when these beliefs run counter to human reason and common sense ? How can they safely say that any particular doctrine of theirs is really based on the teachings of Christ ? As a matter of fact the whole position becomes doubtful and the very right for the Church doctrines to be called Christian is capable of being challenged.

We will do well to remember this initial doubt. Applying this key to the doctrine under review namely, the Divine Sonship of Jesus what do we come to ? We have every right to doubt the meaning attached to the term by the Christians. Firstly, on the ground that it may not be the teachings of Christ at all. Secondly, by examining the terms "Son of God" "Son of Man" and "Father" as they are used even in the Gospels. As al-

ready observed, this examination clearly proves that Christ never meant what the Christians would make us understand by the term "Son of God". It being so, it is evident that the root of this doctrine of the Divine Sonship of Jesus in the sense of the Church, lies neither in the real teachings of Christ nor in the teachings of Christ as recorded even in the Gospels, but in the mere interpretation of the term "Son of God" by some individual. Who this individual is, and what led to the acceptance of his interpretation by the Christian Church is proposed to be shewn next.

The Greek Translation of the Gospels.

Jesus was a Jew and, Hebrew was his mother tongue. He preached in Hebrew. Who was the first man to reduce the teachings of Christ into Hebrew is not known for certainty. Neither is there any copy of this earliest Hebrew Gospel, if any, at present existing. All that exists now is a

Greek translation of a work called Logia, supposed to have been written in Hebrew language by St. Matthew, the immediate disciple of Jesus. It is this Greek translation of the Logia that is now called the Gospel of St. Matthew and is the earliest of the four Gospels. But the earliest of Christian documents were the letters of St. Paul, who was originally a Jew but was later a convert to Christianity. He was not the immediate disciple of Jesus. It is he who gave the term "Son of God" some new interpretation, which has been made the basis of the new meaning attached to this term. As has been already observed this interpretation is not supported by the Gospel of St. Matthew, which does nothing more than recording the terms "Son of God" and "Son of Man" applied to Jesus. The first proof and the basis of the Christian sense of the term, is to be found in the interpretation of St. Paul. Now the question is: is the interpretation of St. Paul to be more valued than the original terms

used by St. Matthew, the immediate disciple of Jesus ? Has no other Christian the right to interpret the original term "Son of God" as used in St. Matthew's Gospel ? Why bow to St. Paul alone ? Why give precedence to his interpretations over the Gospels themselves ? Why so slavishly stick to the past ? These are the questions which a modern Christian must ask himself.

Let us now turn to the fact of the Greek translation of the Logia. The oldest manuscript copy traceable of the Gospels is in Greek. The Hebrew original is extinct. Thus the Greek language is the only existing vehicle of the teachings of Jesus. But a translation can never approach the beauty of the original and the choicest phrases of the Greek literature could hardly express the exact idea of the original sayings of Jesus in the Hebrew tongue. This is an additional defect of the Gospel that we can not see its original and are thus denied the opportunity to have our own interpretation of the teachings of Christ in his own words.

As already observed the idea of Sonship was quite a common place doctrine in the Jewish circle. But to a non-Jew the idea of God having Sons morally was unusual. Little did St. Paul realise the great bone of contention that he was throwing in non-Jewish circles in his interpretation of the term "Son of God" He could hardly anticipate the wranglings that this unfortunate term was to cause. He could not see the danger, which his interpretation of the term "Son of God" was sure to raise outside the pale of Judaism. The Greeks got a handle in this interpretation and when the early Greek Fathers turned the Messiah into "Son of God" they really set a spark in an inflammable and highly explosive material. The Greeks, in spite of the lofty philosophy of a few individuals among them, were religiously heathens and the idea of one God had not yet dawned upon the masses. They were idolaters and thought like idolaters. Their idea of Divinity was as much as idolatry could give them and the multiplicity

of the God-head was only natural to them. But the higher form of religion conceived by the Greeks was embodied in their conception of Zeus, who was considered to be the father of gods and men and was supposed to have many wives. Thus to the better classes of the Greeks the idea of God having sons and wives was familiar enough. To the Jews God had Sons morally, but to the Greeks God had real Sons.

To the Greeks therefore, the notion of a son of God was quite congenial, and when the Greek Fathers accepted the interpretation of St. Paul and began to preach the doctrine of Sonship of Jesus, they were not preaching anything strange. To the Greeks this notion was even exalted. To give up hosts of gods for God and His only Son Jesus Christ, was a great improvement for the Greeks. This satisfied their reason and faith alike and the Jewish seed sown upon so congenial a soil bore abundant fruit. It was simply a case of adjusting the old Greek theology. The notion remained the

same. The names were changed. The Greek gods are embodied in the new Jesus and the old Zeus becomes the Father. It is old wine put into new bottle. And the philosophy of Plato and Socrates gives the new theology its final shape. "Many of the early Greek Fathers" says Dr. Rashdall, the Dean of Carlisle "Irenaeus., for instance and Athanasius obviously thought of Him (Christ) simply as the Logos of God residing in a human body" or in other words to many of the early Greek fathers, Christ was an incarnation of God on earth. This was the position taken up by the early Greek fathers, and in spite of the spread of Christianity in many lands since then, the notion formed by these early Greeks still stands substantially the same.

Can there be any better proof of the great impression made by the early Greeks over Christianity ? And as it was through the Greek Bible that translation was made into Latin and from Latin into other European languages, the importance of this

great impression early made by the Greeks can hardly be over-rated. Europe was converted into Christianity, not with the Hebrew Bible of Jesus, but with its Greek translation moulded into a shape, which the soil of Greece was best suited to give. The philosophy of Greece had long been the standard of Europe and the turn of its religion too came and it got itself enthroned among the nations of Europe, although in a different name. The heathens of Europe were worse than the Greeks and it was only natural if the reformed Hellenism of ancient Greece, engulfed the barbarians. Europe was religiously too low to grasp even the adulterated Christianity of the Asiatics and hence, perhaps it had to be coloured with Greek dyes to be fascinating to those wild people. The Romans were the most civilised people in Europe then, but even they were idolators and the Greeks proved themselves their masters even in religious matters.

We thus see that Christianity entered Europe through Greece but in so doing was

coloured by ancient Hellenism. The letters of St. Paul, the earliest of Christian documents, may contain the term "Son of God" and may contain hints at giving this term a new meaning but it remained for the Greeks to develop that idea and give it its existing significance. That this is no idle remark, is proved by the fact that the Christian Cult including the Doctrine of Sonship of Jesus had already matured before the first Council of Nice held in 325 A. C. to condemn the view of Arius, a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, who held that Christ was not the eternal Son of God. The period between the death of Jesus and 325 A. C. is the period of the supremacy of the Greeks in Christianity and coincidentally this is the period also of the growth and maturity of the Christian doctrines including the doctrine of Sonship. Nothing can prove more conclusively the importance of the Greeks in the Church religion. Europe having nothing better, had to accept the doctrines manufactured

in the Greek School. But the better days of Europe are not far distant, and the great intellectual progress made by Europeans in the teeth of opposition from the Church, has already placed them in a position to see for themselves the hellenism of the Church and the hollowness of its pretensions. The higher critics on Bible have battered the Church fortress to the ground, and it only remains for the facts to be realised by the masses before that already tottering tower topples down to the earth. Let us now turn from the Greek translation of the Bible and its effect upon Christianity to the other equally important fact namely, the various Councils held by the early Christians, mostly Greeks, to determine the Christology. Unlike the world of Islam, where the teachings of Muhammad and not his personality, have been the chief concerns of his followers, we find Christians attaching more importance and greater weight to the nature and personality of Christ rather than his teachings. The various Councils held from

the earliest time off and on, testify to the truth of this remark. To a Christian it has mattered more to philosophise about what Christ was rather than what Christ taught. The personality of Christ has ever been the bone of contention around which Christian controversy has always waxed the hottest. It is not proposed here to go into details as to what was said and drawn up as articles of belief in the various Councils. Suffice it to say that there was enough wrangling on Christology to keep the mental energies and philosophies of the Christian Fathers engaged, either in drawing up and supporting one set of beliefs or condemning some other.

This constant wrangling over the Logos Christology, produced its natural effect, and the pivot of the Church came to be, not the religion of Christ, but his personality. In the heat of controversy the corn was ignored and the husk made the corner-stone of the Church. And, it is no wonder, if out of this undue importance attached to the personality of Christ, the original idea

of his Sonship conceived by St. Paul, but matured and developed by the early Greeks, gathered strength day by day and in Council after Council, till to-day the Sonship of Christ is the one dogma on which the whole fabric of the Church religion rests. No amount of good works, no amount of personal efforts can at all be beneficial to a Christian, till he clutches upon this all-important dogma and surrenders himself, body and soul, to this grand mystery of the Church, a mystery which remains a mystery even to the reverend fathers themselves, not to speak of the non-Christian heathen, who is simply incapable either to appreciate its true meaning or grasp its real significance ! After all the controversies of centuries and the schism getting greater and greater, is there in human vocabulary a more unfortunate term than the "Son of God" or can there be a more unhappy use of any term so fraught with religious danger than the use of the term Messiah or "Son of God" in the letters

of St. Paul ? Nothing has divided the Christians so much as this "Son of God" and no term has been so widely and long discussed. Ever since the new meaning attached to the term, the "Son of God" has been in the melting pot and will ever remain so, till it comes down from the height, which it has wrongly occupied in the Church theology.

But it may be asked : why this constant wrangling over Christology in Christendom ? Let us be charitable. It was only natural on the part of the Christians to desire to know, as much as possible, of the life of their Saviour. Who was Christ, who were his parents, what was his early life, how he came to have the revelation, what sort of life he led, what he taught are only a few among the host of questions that would naturally arise in the minds of all eager and sincere men. But unfortunately what was there to satisfy these pious curiosities ? Historically Christ was, and even now

is dead to the world. There is no biography of him written by his contemporaries. All that now exists of him is only pure imagination, drawn from certain outstanding facts recorded of him in the Bible. In short, what we have is the picture of Jesus drawn by imagination and not the Christ of real history.

With material so scanty and curiosity so great, it is little wonder if the personality of Jesus became the pivot round which gathered the imagination of his followers. People began to have their own ideas about him and, guided by *rumours* and fanciful stories about the resurrection of Christ after his crucifixion together with the stories current about the grand miracles alleged to have been performed by him, the Christians began to regard him as something superhuman. Just consider the age when devils and belief in devils are everywhere, when evil spirits abound on all sides in men, women and even in swines, and you will

realise what a superstitious age it must be ! Such an age is surely a fruitful ground for all sorts of credulities, the more so when there are no written records to correct men's views.

Thus the process of fancy and imagination about Jesus went on apace fed by all sorts of rumours and wonderful stories. Some would say Jesus had no father, he was born through Divine agency ; some would say the wise men of the East came to worship him guided by the Star of Nativity, which arose in the heavens on his birth ; some would say that he healed the sick, cleansed the lepers and raised the dead to life ; others would say that he forgave sins as no man ever did and that he arose three days after his death on the cross and then again ascended to heaven where he is still alive. This spirit of wonder, of something unusual underlying all these views, worked upon the credulity of men, specially of that superstitious age and tended like the ever-in-

creasing volume of a shadow to grow greater and greater with distance of time and place till it engulfed like the eclipse, the whole of Christendom. How strong this hold is may be understood if we consider how, in spite of the great intellectual awakening and the great progress made in science and in all branches of knowledge, the educated Christians even of these days, still stick to the mysterious in Christology conceived in those credulous times. If the people living in these days of the wonders of science—the triumph of reason and common sense—could still subscribe to these mysteries who can blame the ignorant early Christians and doubt the bonafide of their belief ?

Human mind is prone to be credulous and the more so in religious matters. This natural tendency is fed and developed rightly or wrongly by the spirit of the age. If it is an age of credulity our innate sense of credulity feeds fat on this. If, however, it is an age of strong common

sense and reason the innate sense of credulity is modified accordingly and gives birth to pure faith, which is always the innate sense of credulity modified and approved by reason. This great psychic law works as other laws of Nature and its working is clearly visible in the conception and maturity of this doctrine. To his contemporaries Christ is either a wizard or a Prophet, to his immediate followers the promised Messiah. After his death the elements to create the mysterious in his nature come into existence in the form of the spirit of wonder prevailing in all things connected with Christ. His birth, his life and his death are all full of wonders which are magnified in geometrical progression with the lapse of time and the distance of the place from the native land of Christianity. Thus the spirit of wonder travelling into various lands and striking the imagination of many nations, living in a credulous age, feeds fat till Jesus the man is raised to the degree

of Divinity and Jesus the prophet is ennobled in the near relation of the "Son of God" !

It will thus appear how the innocent term "Son of God" in the mouth of Jesus became heretical in the sense given to it initially by St. Paul and later on by the early Greeks and other European converts, who had hardly any monotheistic religion before. Christianity in Europe had thus only to fight with Fetishism or some such primitive religion and naturally even this adulterated religion of the Asiatics proved itself superior to its European rival. Europeans accepted the Sonship of Jesus naturally and in innocent good faith. It was the case of the one-eyed leading the blind.

Had Christianity developed in the land of its birth and had it been accepted by the Jews, the "Son of God" would most probably have remained only a Messiah or "Son of God" morally in the sense of the Old Testament. But the case was different

with the Greek idolators, the degenerate Romans, the warlike Franks, the wild Huns and the fierce Norsemen. Being religiously very low and having never been able to soar up beyond primitive Fetishism, the European races had to bow down to the far superior religion even in a Christianity, shaped in the land of the Hellas and moulded in the Grecian philosophy. Thus the "Son of God" like water, seeking its own level, spread naturally, not in the land of the religious supermen but in regions inhabited by people, only fit to receive it.

There is yet another reason why this doctrine has so long remained not only unassailed but practically more strengthened. The Church did not allow the right of private interpretation of the Bible. All religious thinking in Christendom was, and even now is, done by the Church, and the Church has monopolised the right of interpretation of the Bible. It is for the Church to draw up articles of belief which must be accepted in *toto*. Rejection of any

of these articles of belief brought down excommunication, anathema or even burning on the stake. Such rigid discipline of the Church, though making the Church too powerful, tended to curb the religious development of the masses. It was a case of discipline carried too far, and this forced curbing of the religious spirit killed real religion throughout Christendom altogether and the result is only too obvious. Ask a Christian as to what his religion is and you are sure to upset him. Perhaps you will be referred to the priest. This habit of treating religion as another's concern, is artificial and truly pitiable. It brings to prominence most pointedly the position to which the Church has reduced the rank and file of Christendom. And it is no wonder, if the accumulated sins of its innocent dupes, fall now on its own shoulders, and it bewails over the vacant pews as a rule in the Christian Church. People of Europe and America, rolling in luxury and living in physical wealth, are truly poor spiritually. But the

time of spiritual reaction has already set in, and the West is marching now, as never before, *enmasse* towards spirituality. Christianity has hard time now, and the era of science and progress which is really responsible for this reaction, is proving itself a deadly enemy to the three besetting sins of the Church, namely, *Bigotism, Dogmatism and Fanaticism*. All these must go and the Church is already down upon its knees, no longer bullying, but trying to accommodate itself to the new ways of the people. The hitherto inflexible doctrines are being melted in the heat of controversy and explanations are being got up to give the ecclesiastical dogmas, conceived in a credulous age, a semblance of reason. But too much stretching is suicidal, and the days of the Church are numbered and, with it, the days also of the pagan ideas of the Greeks. The "Son of God" must be crucified the second time, not on the wooden cross of the Romans but on the cross of science and reason of the modern Christians to give birth in

reformed Christendom to Jesus Christ, the prophet of Allah, the Merciful and Compassionate.

Islam with its strong common sense and flood of light is already implanted in a Christian land, and the "Light of the Lord" will, slowly but surely, enlighten the benighted regions of the Church. Jesus, the prophet of God will live and live for ever. But the "Son of God" was never born on this earth and shall never live down here. He lives mentally in Christendom. Islam will chase him away even from these fairy regions and will, for the second time, preach true honour to the great Asiatic—the prophet Jesus. At a time when, of all the holy personages on earth, Christ and his mother Mary were the most reviled ones, when the Jews had but contempt for them and when the world treated them with scorn, that truly great man Muhammad (on whom be Peace and blessings of God) and that truly Holy Book, the Quran

taught for the first time the real greatness of these holy ones of God. And if to-day, Jesus and his mother are treated with real respect and reverence by the four hundred millions of Muslims scattered all over the globe, it is due to the preachings of Muhammad and Muhammad alone. Yet the Christians can afford to be abusive and vile towards this very Muhammad—the greatest and the most successful defender of their Master and Saviour ! Yet Christendom would regard the Quran as a mere fabrication and the work of the Devil !! Says the Holy Book :—

“And when the Angels said ; O Mary ! Surely Allah has choosen you and purified you and choosen you above the women of the world.

2. *“When the angles said ; O Mary ! Surely Allah gives you good news with a word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary, worthy*

*of regard in this world and the hereafter,
and of those who are made near (to Allah)*

The family of Amran, 41, 44

3. *“Certainly they disbelieve who say:
Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, Son of
Mary; and the Messiah said: O children
of Israel! serve Allah, my Lord and your
Lord. Surely whoever associates (others)
with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to
him the garden, and his abode is the fire;
and there shall be no helpers of the unjust.*

4. *“The Messiah, Son of Mary, is
but an apostle; apostles before him have
indeed passed away; and his mother was a
truthful woman; they both used to eat food.
See how We make the communications clear
to them, then behold, how they are turned
away”—*

5. *“Say: Do you serve besides Allah
that which does not control for you any
harm, or any profit? And Allah—He is
the Hearing, the knowing—*

6. *"Say : O followers of the Book ! be not unduly immoderate in your religion, and do not follow the low desires of people who went astray before and led many astray and went astray from the right path—*

—The Food, 72, 75, 76, 77.

7. *"Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah, as the likeness of Adam ; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was.*

—The Family of Amran, 58

The first verse states how Mary was the most honoured of women in her time and how she was the chosen one of God for her righteousness. The second verse gives her good news of a son, who will be honourable in this world and the next and who will be one made near to God. The third verse states how Jesus preached the unity of God and how even he denied salvation to those who were polytheists. It also places such people as ascribe divinity to Jesus among the disbelievers. The fourth verse brings home to such people the fact that Jesus and

his mother both ate food and were therefore, only human beings made of flesh and blood. The one distinction as regards Jesus was that he was an apostle of God, and the only distinction of his mother was that she was a truthful woman and nothing more. The fifth verse states the impotence of the belief in the Divinity of Christ. Since God is One who alone is the Hearing and Knowing, all else must be otherwise. Hence the fond belief of the Christians that Jesus is either the Son of God or God Himself is worthless and, service to Jesus in the sense of service to God is so much piety lost. Jesus is great only when he is the true servant of God. Otherwise he is nothing. Therefore the one way to serve both Jesus and God is to act upon what Jesus himself taught, namely, his apostleship and the unity of God. The sixth verse commands the Christians not to be unduly immoderate in their religion by having this belief. Such a belief, it takes as originating in the low desires of men,

who have not only gone astray themselves but have also laid others astray. In these words the Quran refers to the historical truth how the false doctrines of the Sonship of Jesus and the Trinity of the God-head, originated with people who were low down spiritually and certainly not of the level of men for whom Christianity was meant. History shows that these people were the Greeks, who shaped the Christian doctrines in the form in which they exist now. The seventh verse further states that Jesus was, like Adam made of clay and like him, was a man and a prophet too.

Thus to Islam and its Holy Book the Quran, Jesus is but a man like the other prophets of the world. He was one of the numerous prophets, whom God has raised from time to time to reclaim mankind. Of such were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Zoraster, Rama, Krishna and Buddha. Jesus can claim no distinction over them. He was of the same materials as these great and revered teachers of humanity. There was

no difference in his essence, no speciality in him as regards the Divine Essence. Islam takes stand on the solid ground of common sense and states that *to man only a man can be a guide, an example*. No angel and never God Himself have been, will be or can be the fit model for humanity. They are too high for man. Man can be reclaimed by man alone—a perfect man of course, but no God no angel and why ?

What does, after all, reclamation, salvation or perfection of mankind mean ? Does it mean anything else but to bring out and develop, to the fullest possible extent, all the latent faculties of man ? Does it mean anything else but to turn the savage into the best man ? Does it mean anything else but self expression ? Human perfection is not perfection itself. It is after all human and therefore, subject to all the limitations consequent upon the limited faculties of man. Stretch it to the utmost, it can not be Perfection itself. It ends where Perfection begins and that is the salvation of man,

his perfection. How can then the Perfect be the fit model for the Imperfect ?

The imperfect has to be as far perfect as it can be. But in this process of perfection a method has to be followed, a course to be adopted. And what is the aim of this method but to regulate the various faculties of man to such a channel as will ultimately lead to the desired goal—Perfection ? “Strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life”. A guide is necessary here, a light is required to show the uphill path. This guide is a perfect man and the light is his teachings. How the man has lived, how he has acted, how he has believed to attain perfection is a necessity to mankind for its perfection. These “hows”, however, must be the “hows” of a perfect man—a being akin to man—and not those of one higher than man—a foreigner essentially.

Thus, to Islam, Jesus is a perfect man, a prophet of God, whose mission of life was like others, to reclaim mankind by his

example and precepts and nothing else. Jesus can not be divine in any sense other than that in which a perfect man is divine, a prophet is divine. What then can the doctrine of Sonship of Jesus mean ? It can mean nothing but the God in man to the extent of the human faculties, which is a perfect man. It can only mean what a prophet or an apostle means. If so, why call Jesus the "Son of God", why use this term which has cast doubts into the hearts of innumerable men ? Why take shelter under this frail sappling of a belief which common sense and reason in man can never accept but in the garb of a mystery ? Why should there be any such mystery at all ? Does religion consist in such mysteries ? Has common sense nothing to do with religion ?

After all why attach so much undue importance to this doctrine ? If Jesus is called the "Son of God" is he not also called the "Son of Man" ? If Jesus is the "Son of God" essentially in the Christian sense, he can not at the same time be "Son of

man" as well. Jesus can be both simultaneously only morally. The Bible therefore is not at fault here. It clearly states what the fact is. Here again the fault lies with the interpretation and not with the real teaching of Christ. Jesus is both "Son of God" and "Son of man" and this is true to the very letter. There is nothing unusual in this. Every man, even the cut-throat, is both a "Son of God" and "Son of man" morally, the perfect ones of mankind, the prophets even more so. Wherein then lies the speciality of the 'Biblical statement that a sense has been given in the case of Jesus, quite unique and unprecedented ? Is it the virgin birth of Jesus that has made the Christians think so ? Why ! Adam had no parents at all according to the same Bible.

How then this belief came into existence ? The answer has been already given. It is merely an outgrowth on the death of Christ and the interpretation given to the term "Son of God" by St. Paul is primarily

responsible for this doctrine. The Greeks further developed the idea and the European converts to Christianity being no better than them innocently accepted it. Thus the prophet of God, the loving Jesus was made the only Son of God and was enthroned in the God-head to his eternal grief and shame before the "Father", through the overzeal of his ignorant followers. If undue importance is an insult, then surely the doctrine of Sonship of Jesus is humiliating to him, who was only a prophet of God.

In conclusion, we would request our Christian brethren—the people of the Book—to think over the whole question seriously. After all, does it really matter as to who Christ was, so long as one sincerely believes in his divine mission and acts up to his teachings ? Is it essential that one should believe in his "Sonship ? Is it absolutely necessary for one's salvation ? Which is more important for man : the teachings or the personality of Christ ? Let the Church

say what it may like. After all the Church is not infallible. It can not abrogate the right of private opinion and personal belief. Can the liberty of the West be compatible with this slavishness to which the Church seeks to subject it ? Can there be no liberty for the Westerners in matters most vital to man ? Do they like liberty in mere worldly matters ? Can they afford to stagnate thus religiously ?

Of course, not. Let them then honour that great man who for the first time taught the use of individual reason and private judgment. Let them pay homage to Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) who for the first time preached his religious liberty. Let all, sick of priestcraft, receive Lord Muhammad, who got rid of this religious pest. Honour him who honoured Jesus and his mother Mary at a time when no body in the world honoured them. Honour him who is the greatest and the most successful avenger of the chastity of Mary and the most potent

defender of Christ. Honour him who has taught true honour and reverence to your great Master to the four hundred millions of Muslims scattered all over the globe. Honour him who has taught Muslims to say "His holiness Jesus on whom be peace". Admire him whose charity made Jesus, to him as well as to his followers, one of the greatest prophets of the Lord. Give to Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) his due and you can never repay him and oblige his followers better than by giving Jesus his just due. Let the "Son of God" not bother you. Let the prophet of Allah, the great Jesus teach you. Listen to him and all else will come in due course. All the mysteries of the Church will disappear automatically and nothing but truth will remain. Dogmas of course shall go but principles, rational principles will live for ever. If the term "Christian" conveys to you the best that is in man, of course, the best in man does not consist in a dogma like the Sonship of Jesus. The best in man

can not afford to divorce reason altogether. It can not grow on mere mysteries. Just think. It is not a question of Muhammad or Christ to you. It is rather a question of Muhammad and Christ or the Church. It is a question of fact or fiction. It is a question of life or death. For God's sake think and think seriously.

CHAPTER IV.

The God-head.

The Doctrine of Trinity.

God-head is the fountain head from which the stream of Religion flows and naturally, it is the most important theme in all the great religions of the world with the exception, perhaps, of Buddhism. The conception of God is the test of the spirituality of a religion and hence it is most important that we must try to fully understand the Christian conception of the God-head. A Christian theologian says :—

“What had He (Jesus Christ) to say about God ? For after all the character of God is the deepest of all questions of faith. Jesus accepted the teachings of the Jewish faith in its view of a personal and Holy God, the Author of the universe, the Creator of the world its moral legislator.

“Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man”

He added thereto the teaching of God’s fatherhood”.*

It has been already shown in the preceding Chapter how according to another Christian writer † the idea of God’s Fatherhood was already familiar enough to the Jews. The claim that the idea of fatherhood was an addition made by Jesus, therefore, falls to the ground. As a matter of fact, it is really surprising how a Christian can make such a claim. The perusal of the New Testament will at once reveal to any one the striking fact that Jesus Christ, who bitterly criticised the Jews for their hypocrisy in observing the mere letter and neglecting the spirit of the old law, did not

* Paper on Christianity read by Rev. Herbert Anderson in the Convention of Religions in India held in 1910 at Calcutta.

† A. G. Hogg. M. A. in his Christ’s Message of the Kingdom, Page 146.

raise even his little finger against the Jewish conception of the God-head. He never denounced this and never for once said that the Jewish conception of God was faulty. This clearly proves that he accepted the Old Testament conception of God unreservedly and not only partially, as observed by Rev. H. Anderson.

Another point which will strike any reader of the Bible is the scantiness with which the God-head has been treated in the New Testament. As a matter of fact, but for the Old Testament the Divine conception of the New Testament would be too meagre and incomplete to give an adequate idea of God. To any impartial reader it will appear that the New Testament treatment of the Divine conception by itself, is almost nothing beyond "The Father in Heaven." For what this "Father in Heaven" is like, one has to revert to the Old Testament. The whole trend of the New Testament treatment of the Divine theme is to refer

one to the Old Testament for this all important question in religion. Strictly speaking, for the nature of the God of the New Testament one has to go, not to Christ but to Moses and to the prophets of the Old Testament. The New Testament is but a book of reference, a mere index to the Old Testament in this respect. It has added absolutely nothing new to the Old Testament conception of the God-head.

Nothing proves more clearly the utter dependence of the New Testament on the Old Testament. Jesus, who came for the lost sheep of Israel alone in his own words, did never mean to destroy the laws already in the possession of the Israelites. He came to fulfil and therefore all that he did, was to add where addition was necessary. But in the Divine conception he had absolutely nothing to add. The Israelites had already had that and this fact was clearly recognised by Christ when he silently endorsed

their view. Search the whole Gospel according to St Matthew, the earliest Gospel as observed in the preceding chapter, and you will find nothing to subvert this view. How then can the Christian safely afford to dissent from the Old Testament conception here ?

Here again the fault lies with the interpretation of the teachings of Christ by certain individual and not with the real teachings themselves. If the doctrines of the Vicarious Atonement and the Sonship of Jesus, were established by St. Paul, it was reserved for the Apostle John to establish the famous doctrine of Trinity. In verse 7 Chapter V of his "First Epistle General" says John :—

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one". This laid the foundation of the famous doctrine of the Trinity of the God-head. John was a Platonist and it was he who introduced the incomprehensible Trinity

of Plato or Triad of the East. Thus the philosophy of the ancient Hellas gave to Christ's Christianity its final shape. The simplicity of Christ's religion was destroyed and one more mystery was added to the Church religion.

This Text "has been proved by the labours of Newton, Gibbon, Porson, and others, to have been an interpolation; and Calmet himself acknowledges *that this verse is not found in any ancient copy of the Bible*". * But the Greek influence on the Church has been too strong to admit of the possibility of shaking this Platonic doctrine off. As a matter of fact this mystery is the grandest mystery of the Church and devout Christians will hardly even attempt to understand it. It is fruitless to try to grasp the incomprehensible. Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity is of course baffling to the human intellect as a whole. It is a speciality of Plato and it requires

* "Essay on the Koran" by H. A. S. Robertson.

a Plato to understand this. Christians would like to give this treat to the Muslims and to the world !!

This is yet another rock on which the Christian reason must be wrecked. It is another whirlpool which must leave the reason in man whirling. Reason can never solve it. The wings of reason are unable to soar up to this height. It is only the wings of a Christian's faith that can, of course, scale it. Common sense has no place here and human reason must be crucified to understand this mystery of the Cross. But man can hardly afford to put aside reason altogether. Whenever he does, he clutches at a broken reed. Without the satisfaction of reason—that great thing in man—even faith is of little moment. It is too weak to stand the onslaught of reason. One may believe anything. But unless his reason is satisfied, he is certainly not on sure ground. Reason is the test of faith and faith without

reason is after all "blind". Naturally it can not move the whole self of man.

Things Divine may be above human reason. But this does not mean that there is absolutely no room for reason here. Take any attribute of God, and you will find that it is simultaneously within and without your reason. God is Holy. Human reason can not understand what this Absolute holiness is. But at the same time, it offers you a conception of holiness, which partial though it may be, helps you to understand as far as humanly possible, the Absolute holiness. But for this initial help, afforded by human reason, God's holiness would remain unintelligible to man. Thus in all things Divine, reason is a sure help, and, although not the one thing needful, yet the one thing that can hardly be dispensed with safely. Yet reason must find no place in the doctrine of the Trinity of the God-head!

Since our Christian brethren must have the Trinity in spite of the teachings of Christ being clearly to the contrary, let us

examine this doctrine as it is. The Trinity is thus defined by Webster :—

“The union of three persons or hypostases (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) in one God-head, so that all the three are one God as to substance, but three persons or hypostases as to individuality”. This tantamounts to saying that in the God-head there are three distinct persons, although all these three are from the same substance. Yet the Christians say that God is one ! They will never admit that they are polytheists. If then the Christian claim to call themselves monotheists be justified, it follows that unity can be proved even if personalities differ but the essence is the same. Let us see where it logically leads us. All men are essentially the same i. e. they come from the same essence but in personalities they differ. Applying the Christian logic here, all men become one. Are the Christians ready to accept this conclusion ? Is it true to them ? If not how can the Trinity of the God-head on the same

data be true ? Plants are of various kinds, but still essentially they belong to that something which makes them plant. Are therefore all plants one ? Animals are numerous. But still essentially they are all one. Are they therefore all one ? Are dogs cows, lions goats and, dogs, cows, lions, goats all one ? If not, how can the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost having three different personalities like men, animals and plants but like them essentially one, be one and the same ?

It is strange and strange indeed that such an impossibility, such a clearly false idea should be prevalent in the religion of the West, the land of Science and of wonders of the wireless ! Incongruity can hardly go further. Had such a belief been prevalent among primitive people, one would ascribe it to the dullness of their mental vision. But it is really pitiable that such a notion should exist in the most important thing in the religion of the people, who are certainly intellectually the most advanced at

the present time. Let the Church say what it does about it, and let us even suppose that it is true, even then, to Asiatics and specially to Muslims, it is and will ever remain a mere nothing. Man may be credulous but can he be so credulous ? It is inconceivable. Yet the people of the West are a living example of how for man, in spite of his reason and education, can be credulous. If Trinity like this can be superior to pure and uncompromising unity of the God-head then of course, Christianity is indeed superior to Islam !!

But, like the other mysteries of the Church religion, this grand mystery also has its history, and it has been established finally in Christendom, not without a long and fierce controversy. As already observed, the first founder of this doctrine was the Platonist Apostle John. But he had not everything his own way easily, and there have been people in Christendom who have raised their voice against this doctrine, although the Greeks, versed in the Platonic

philosophy, ultimately proved themselves too strong for these dissenters in the various Councils that were held, off and on, to discuss the Logos Christology and settle the Christian Cult. The opinion of a few will not be out of place here.

The first dissenter of note from this view was Arius, a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria who died in 336 A. C. and *"held that Christ was the first and the noblest of all created beings but that, as there was a time when he was not, he was not the eternal Son of God, and that there was no Trinity, as the Son was not of the same substance as the Father". What a reasonable view is this. But alas ! it could not make any impression upon the Platonists who had already succeeded in firmly establishing the Trinity. It was too much for the efforts of one man, howsoever, brave and this view was condemned and treated as a heresy in the first Council of Nice held in 325 A. C.

Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople *"held the Holy Ghost to be a creature

like the angels, and a servant and minister of the Father and the Son." This view also was condemned in the Council of Constantinople held in 381 A. C. and the Nicene Creed was reaffirmed.

Apollinaris, the Younger Bishop of Laodicea argued that *"identity both with God and man could not be attributed to the nature of Christ, since that would produce two Sons of God, one real Son and other by adoption, and that as sin is inherent in humanity the Son thus adopted would have sin in him; and therefore in Christ there was only one nature the divine Logos occupying the place of the rational soul but that this single nature had a divine and a human side so perfectly united that the attributes of each could be applied to the other". Apollinaris died in 390 A. C.

Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople in the 5th century on the other hand maintained *"that the divine and human natures were not merged into one person in Christ (who was God in man) and hence it was

wrong to call Mary the mother of God though she might be called the mother of Christ. * * * The position of Nestorius was that there was in Christ a union but not a union of essence, between God and man'. * He was also condemned as a heretic by the Council of Epheus held in 431 A. C.

Thus finally Plato triumphed and Christ failed. Plato probably, conceived of this Trinity on coming to know of the Hindu Triad of Bramha (the Creator), Vishnu (The Preserver) and Mahesh (The Destroyer). But the Hindu Triad is far more philosophic and the Hindu savants have, unlike the Christians, always treated this Triad as merely three aspects of the one God. To the Christians however, there are three distinct personalities in the God-head namely, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. In this sense there can never be Unity in the Trinity. It is a real Trinity and if the Christians claim that they are monotheists it is a mere sophism on their part. No

* Webster's New International Dictionary.

amount of arguments can subvert facts and no philosophers in the world can assert and prove that one is three and three is one. It is an impossibility and nothing is gained by mere play upon words. To common sense the bare fact of the Trinity remains and all the philosophy and arguments of Christendom for proving Unity in this Trinity, evaporate like rain water in a desert.

Here again common sense obstructs as in the other doctrines of the Church. Common sense, it appears, has absolutely no place in the great mysteries of the Church. They are mysteries and must therefore be believed as such. Yet this is the perfect conception of God to which Christendom would convert the whole world ! If unity of God is the truth and, even the Christians assert that it is so, it is really strange what do the Christians gain by having this peculiar view of the Unity. It is unintelligible what is gained by making the Unity impossible through preaching this queer Unity in the Trinity. To non-Christians,

it is strange why the main thing, the Unity should be thrown at the back ground and the Trinity given the prominence. No religion in the world has such a queer view on the subject and the followers of no religion have taken up such a ridiculous position as the Christians. While they would like to call themselves Monotheists, they really preach and believe in the Trinity. Contradiction was never greater !

This is a clear case of sticking, at all costs, to the notion conceived by the Apostle John in a credulous time. The notion is obsolete and some Christians at least must see all this. But the structure of the Church is at stake. To acknowledge the error is to humiliate it and therefore, it is incompatible with the pride and dignity of the Church to give this doctrine up, even though it be mere nothing, a play upon words. But this obstinacy hardly promotes the cause of religion, of truth. It is unchristian and, if Christianity is to convey to us the notion of the best in religion, as

is claimed by its followers, undoubtedly it is first of all a Christian's duty to give up this erroneous conception, alike derogatory to God and the best in man. Come to Unity simple and uncompromising, and give up this play upon words.

To any one who has read the history of Christology, it will be quite evident that the origin of this Trinity lies in the eagerness of the Christians to accommodate Christ in the God-head. The wrong step at the very beginning, taken by St. Paul and after him followed by the early Greek fathers tended, as already shown, under the circumstances prevailing at the period of earliest Christianity, to make of Christ a real Son of God. And once this doctrine was firmly established, the Son was naturally accommodated in the God-head. The necessity of all this, however, disappears if the Christians only believe that Jesus Christ was a mere prophet and that prophets like him have already passed away. The Christians would thus find a real solution of all

their difficulties, not in the teachings of Christ as interpreted in Christendom, but in the preachings of Christ as recorded in the Holy Quran and interpreted by Muslims. Therefore let them turn to the Holy Quran and to Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) for their guidance and real salvation, and not to the Bible which can not be said, as even the Christians know, to contain the real teachings of Christ. Where are the words of Christ, if not in the Bible where? Let the Christians think. Let them ponder whether these mysteries of the Church are real mysteries taught by Christ, or, are these mysteries of St. Paul and the Apostle John going to be the real mysteries for all Christendom? If there is no direct and convincing proof of these mysteries being based on the teachings of the Master, certainly the whole thing is doubtful, and the opinion of two Christians howsoever great, can not be binding upon all Christians for all times specially, when the Christians see for themselves the incon-

gruity of these mysteries. Christians conveniently afford to assert that in Islam everything is hide-bound and fixed. It may be true, but let them first realise how they themselves are enslaved to the past. Muslims may stick to the interpretations of some learned men who died long ago, but these interpretations are even now reasonable. Can the samething be said about the essentials of Christianity ?

Turning now to the attributes of God, all that Christianity of the New Testament has to teach on the topic, is embodied in the term "Father" and even that, as already shewn, is not a term invented by Christ. True, the word "Father" is the one epithet taught by the Christ of the Bible, with which to address the Deity. It may imply a bit of more love in the Divine conception. But the question is : is it a ground over which the Christians should gloat and cry themselves hoarse stating that this term "Father" is the one perfect way to address God ? Let us examine.

God is Holy, and when we think of His Holiness the idea of the Absolute comes to our mind. God is absolutely Holy. What this Absolute Holiness is, we can not realise. But we have to be satisfied that He is Holy. We therefore try to see His Holiness through our relative ken. "A" is holy to us and we begin to realise that the Absolute Holiness must be something like the holiness of "A". We therefore conclude that God's holiness must be, if not exactly like our own holiness, something like our own. To better express this notion we call the Divine holiness unique as nothing is really like it. This is true of all the Divine attributes conceived by man.

This consciousness of our limited faculties to see the perfect attributes of God, this sense of inability, produces in us the ability to see that in our relation to God the choicest words, indicative of the fact, namely, our insignificance to God's significance, our nothingness to God's

absolute power, must be used. We must realise, if we are really advanced that our relation to God is unique. It is neither like the relation of a son to his father nor like anything in the world. Realising this we must be unique in our address to the Deity. We must neither presume to be familiar like the son to the father nor apprehensive as a lamb before a tiger. In short, we should be neither the one nor the other. We must be both simultaneously. We must fear, love and respect Him at the same time. And this attitude is best expressed in our being sincere, lowly and full of awe, and in our prayer we must adopt this attitude, if the true spirit of prayer is to be imbibed.

Is the word "Father" indicative of this attitude of man towards God? Is it not using too familiar a word? Are there no better words indicative of this attitude in human phraseology? After all, why use the word "Father". Is it for the love

that it implies ? Is not then the term "Mother" by far the loveliest ? As a matter, of fact, to apply to the Deity terms indicative of human relationship, is clearly obnoxious to those religiously most advanced. For this reason we can not properly call God, Father, Mother or anything indicative of human relationship. He is no relative of ours. He is unique and we must bear this in mind. To establish relationship with God is to tamper with His uniqueness. We must therefore, if we claim to be most advanced religiously, use only such pure and holy words about God, as will tend to depict His Holy picture, even when seen through our imperfect ken, so high above everything that the Absolute, though seen through human vision, should yet be Absolute, although to the extent humanly possible. Judged from this point of view the choicest term of Christendom "Our Father in Heaven" falls far far short of the standard.

Then again the one thing which the Christians loudly claim to be theirs and theirs alone, is the idea of grace in God. To them the Divine conception in all religions and specially in Islam, is that of a tyrant gloating over the pains of His creatures. This again has to be examined. What underlies the conception of Divine grace in Christianity? According to Christianity, man is a sinner as already observed. He has absolutely no chance to uplift himself spiritually to God. God saw the difficulties and did not, of course, like that His creatures should grope in the dark. But at the same time, God realised the utter impossibility of saving man from his sins by any means other than that of the "Blood." He therefore, through love of mankind sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to be sacrificed for the remission of sins of mankind. Thus to a Christian, the grace of God consists in His great love for mankind as evident from the great

sacrifice made by Him in the Crucifixion of Jesus, His only Son. This is the idea of Christian grace and unique the idea indeed is ! To a Muslim however, the grace of God does not consist in this act of a vicarious sacrifice. What it is, will be shown in due course, but it is well to remember this idea of Divine Grace in Christianity.

If Jesus was sacrificed as a lamb for the expiation of the inherent sins of the sons of Adam, why should not the burden of sin of humanity as a whole be taken away ? Why should our Christian friends only have this privilege exclusively ? If God was Merciful enough to sacrifice His only begotten Son for the sins of man, which could not be removed in any other way, what should make the same Merciful God so hard-hearted to, by far the major portion, of mankind ? Why should salvation not come even to non-Christians ? Surely mankind and Christianity are not even now identical, why then the only Son of God

should be sacrificed for only a part of humanity ? Why ascribe such half measures to God ? Again the same horns of the dilemma !! If God is Merciful and if His Mercy consists pre-eminently in sending down His only begotten Son to be sacrificed for the redemption of the sins of mankind, then surely this sacrifice is for the whole human race ; if however, it is not, then God is only partial and prejudiced. God, however, is not partial. This sacrifice, if the only way of salvation to mankind, must therefore be for the whole human race. If not, wherein lies the speciality of the so-called Christians that their sin alone is removed by this great sacrifice ? Does it lie in their belief in the doctrines of Vicarious Atonement and the Sonship of Jesus, which are the special features of the Christians ? If so, it is not the sacrifice of the Son that removes the sin but the mere belief in these doctrines. If so, where then stands the proposition that God sent His only Son to be sacrificed for the redemption of mankind ?

The correct proposition would rather be to assert that God sent these doctrines to be believed in so that the sins of mankind be redeemed. Are the Christians prepared to accept this logical inference from their belief ? If so, where then stands their idea of grace which consists in the notion of the sacrifice of the only Son of God for the redemption of the sins of mankind ? If mere belief in the vicarious atonement can save mankind why should God be so ungracious to His only begotten Son ? Then again just ponder over the novelty of this idea of grace. The crucifixion of Christ is a sin and the Crucifixion of the only begotten Son of God is the most heinous sin ever committed by man. Yet this very sin, according to Christianity, will save mankind ! Is the sin of man to be redeemed by this greater Sin ? Does the Homœopathic theory of *Similia Similibus Curantur* hold good even here ? If so, a social wretch, a moral bankrupt, a dreg of society should be the best types of saintly virtues ! ! Are the

Christians prepared to admit the logical consequence of this belief of theirs ? Is this compatible with the refinement of the West ? Does it not smell of the same savage idea of human sacrifice, loathsome to modern man, most loathsome to the people of the West ? Yet there it is. Is this notion of the Divine Grace at all ennobling ? Is there a man in the world who would allow a criminal to murder his only son in order to blot out the criminal's criminality ? Would not such a murder be the greatest possible crime according to even Christian law ? Would not even the reverend fathers come down upon such a wretch with all their anathemas ? Yet the Church would ascribe exactly the same procedure to God ! Could there be greater incongruity ? Can there be such contrariety between the ways of God and man ? Is it conceivable that criminality in the eyes of man is virtue in the eyes of God ? Christians ! only think. See where the novel conception of Divine Grace of the Church leads you to. To a

non-Christian all this is very clear and to a thoughtful Christian there should be equally no difficulty. It is, therefore, indeed true for the reverend fathers to claim that a Muslim can not say that God is graceful in the Christian sense. This unique idea of the Divine Grace is the speciality of Christianity alone.

Islamic Conception of God.

The proper denomination of God in Arabic is *Allah*. This term is applied to the Being Who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection, conceivable or inconceivable by man. He is the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting, the Eternal, the Supreme, the Unique in His Person, in His Essence and in His Attributes. Says the Holy Quran :—

1. *Say : He, Allah, is one.*
2. *Allah is He on whom all depend.*
3. *He begets not, nor is He begotten ;*
4. *And none is like Him.”* (The unity)

As to His attributes Allah is Ar-Rahman

(the Beneficent) and Ar-Rahim (The Merciful). The Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is reported to have said "Ar-Rahman is the Beneficent God, whose love and mercy are manifested in the creation of this world, and Ar-Rahim is the Merciful God whose love and mercy are manifested in the state that comes after." God's Perfection creates the Laws first and through the Laws proceeds the creation. The spirit of Beneficence underlies all these Laws. The Laws evolve the universe with its Suns, Moons and Stars and then gradually the habitable worlds spring into being. With the creation of the habitable worlds are evolved all those elements which are essential for life on these worlds. The Sun, the air, water and all things necessary for man are provided before man comes into being. Thus the Beneficent Spirit provides all necessities of life carefully before hand. For this attribute of His, God is Beneficent and Allah is called the Ar-Rahman.

Ar-Rahim or the Merciful God looks to our needs when we have become creatures. This mercy of God is special and works only under certain circumstances. This is responsive, that is, it can respond only to personal efforts of men. It is the special grace of God upon men who deserve it by virtue of their efforts in the right direction. It is a grace which can be purchased at a price and can not be granted indiscriminately. The only price for this is a sincere move in the right direction according to one's light. Thus Allah is Rahman (Benificent) to all creatures through His Loving Nature. But He is Rahim (Merciful) only to those who deserve, through His Essential Justice.

Again Allah is Rabb-il-Aalmin or the Evolver of the worlds. Says Maulana Muhammad Ali in his translation of the Holy Qur-an :—

“The Arabic word Rabb conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing up, or nourishing but also that of regulating, completing and accomplishing, i. e. of the

evolution of things from the crudest state to that of the highest perfection. According to Imam Raghīb, Rabb signifies the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion." Thus Allah being the Rabb is constantly evolving the universe. He is within everything working without rest from within and taking everything to its desired goal. Man has thus within him all the potentialities necessary for his perfection and the Rabb is man's constant guide. He may fall and fail a thousand times but the powerful and the sure hand of the Rabb is always stretched out to him like that of a loving father to his struggling child. Thus a Muslim can never despair of God's mercy. He can not say like a Christian that man is too degenerate to rise by his own efforts. According to Islam every human being, even the most wretched will be saved ultimately through this attribute of God, by which God is constantly his most intimate companion.

To Islam this Rabbaniet of Allah is the great link that binds all creatures throughout the space. It is the necessary link between the Creator and the creature. Islam does not make a total cleavage between the creature and the Creator and hence to Islam there is no need of a vicarious atonement. All that is necessary for the salvation of man is already within him through this Rabbaniet of Allah. He is in the creature and not totally beyond it, localised in one place. Of course, He is not exhausted in the creature, but then in the creature He certainly is. Thus Islam teaches that God is in the creature and even beyond it as opposed to the Christian idea of God being totally beyond the creature.

Again Allah is not only the Rabb or the Evolver from within. He is also the Lord, the King and God of man. Says the Holy Qur-an :—

1. *“Say : I seek refuge in the Lord of men,*
2. *The King of men,*

3. *The God of men,*

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Chapter. CXIV.

Allah is all-in-all the Lord, the King and God. As such our three-fold obligations are due to Him and Him alone. We must realise that God is constantly within us as He is the Evolver and sees all our deviations. We must realise that He is the Lord able to punish us nay, He is the King and is All-powerful. Nothing can escape Him. Being a personal witness to our deviations and being our Lord and King, He must punish us for our deviations in our own interest. As He is carrying us along with Him to a predestined goal we can not afford to be rebellious. The crookedness must be straightened and has to be straightened and therefore, the Judicial Attributes of God work. The whip for the rebellious must be there for driving out the rebellion and bringing the rebel back to obedience in which alone, lies the salvation of man as of all creatures. Thus the wrath

of God must work, not to destroy or cause unnecessary pain, but to cast out the rebellious spirit in man. Thus the Judicial Attributes of God are only for the ultimate good of man. Some will attain grace directly by virtue of being obedient to the Divine Laws, others shall have to feel the whip to be obedient in order to gain the Divine Grace. Thus the Divine whip is necessary to reclaim the rebellious. This is what Islam preaches and impresses upon us when it says that God is our Lord and King.

But then it does not stop here. It says that He is God, that is, He is the Goal itself. He is thus that who is in us constantly evolving us from within, that who is watching our deviations personally, that who can punish and that who is our ultimate goal. He is all-in-all to us. It is therefore our duty to realise this all important fact. Allah is our all. He is our Maker, our Sustainer, our Guide and our Goal simultaneously. If so, all our efforts must be to march with Him. And the only way

to march with Him is firstly to realise that He and He alone *is*, then to pray to Him and Him alone for guidance and lastly to realise what the true spirit of prayer is.

Prayer to be true and effective must be directed to the right person in the right mood. To Islam therefore, prayer to others than God is not only nothing but a sin. Islam is very stern in this respect and preaches that at the very outset the uncompromising unity of the God-head must be clearly and unequivocally admitted and realised. There can be absolutely no compromise here. God is One and ever One. This must be our guide in prayer and we must never allow our vision to be vitiated by pretending to see the One through many. It is a wrong step at the very outset and will not benefit us. The first of the essentials of prayer is therefore to believe in the uncompromising unity of the God-head. No Son and no Holy Ghost should come in to participate in the Divine Unity and tamper with God's uniqueness. To Islam

polytheism is the most heinous sin—the one for which man must be punished and for which God will never forgive man. Says the Holy Quran :—

“Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases ; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great Sin”.

The Women, 48.

This pleasure of God, however, is not arbitrary. It is strictly according to the merit of each case as He alone is capable of knowing. Thus the first necessity in prayer is to know that God is one and then to pray in the right spirit. Thus according to Islam the true prayer is that directed to God alone in the right spirit. Thus says the Holy Qur-an :—

“To Him is due the true prayer ; and those whom they pray to besides Allah give them no answer, but (they are) like one who stretches forth his two hands towards

water that it may reach his mouth, but it will not reach it ; and the prayer of the unbelievers is only in error”.

The Thunder, 14.

Thus true prayer is only that which is directed to God alone. Prayer to others than God is only a vain hope like that of a person “who stretches forth his two hands towards water that it may reach his mouth, but it will not reach it”. It is an initial error and will never lead to true spirituality which comes only through the right sort of prayer. Thus according to Islam the Christian prayer directed to Jesus who is the second person of the God-head is only a vain hope. It will not help.

The whole Qur-an is a vivid testimony to the Unity and Majesty of Allah and the one great feature of the Qur-an is its tone of awe and reverence which it invariably adopts when approaching the God-head. Thus the spirit of the Qur-an is the spirit of true prayer. It assumes that tone of seriousness, awe and lowliness which alone

befits a creature when addressing the Deity and which alone the Qur-an wants its readers to adopt as their guide in true prayer. The Holy Book impresses forcibly the fact that this spirit of true prayer is the one proper method to approach the Deity. This is the one attitude which man must adopt when he considers himself as standing face to face before his Almighty Creator. Since this is the one perfect way leading to true spirituality—the ultimate goal of man—Qur-an has made this way its own, most unequivocally its own. A few verses of the Holy Book will give a better idea of this all important spirit, although translations can never adequately convey the beauty and originality of the original. Says the Holy Qur-an :—

1. *“(All) Praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.*
2. *The Beneficent, the Merciful,*
3. *Master of the day of requital.*
4. *Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.*

5. *Guide us on the right path,*

6. *The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours,*

7. *Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray".—*

The Opening.

Thus the Holy Qur-an opens with the true prayer and its true spirit. The same spirit continues all through the Holy Book and the following verses should suffice to give in a nutshell the idea both of the Islamic conception of God and the spirit of the tone underlying the address to the Deity.

"Allah is He besides whom there is no God, the Everliving the Self-subsisting by whom all subsist ; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep ; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His ; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission ? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases ; His knowledge extends over the heavens

and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.

The Cow, 255.

“All praise is due to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light ; yet those who disbelieve set up equals with the Lord.

“Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth ! How could He have a son when He has no consort, and He (Himself) created everything, and He is the knower of all things.

“That is Allah, Your Lord, there is no god but He ; the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge over all things.

“Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision ; and He is the knower of Subtilities, the Aware :—

The Cattle Verses, 1, 102—104.

“Allah is He who raised the heavens without any pillars that you see, and He is

firm in power, and He made the Sun and the Moon subservient (to you) ; each one pursues its course to an appointed time ; He regulates the affair, making clear the communications that you may be certain of meeting your Lord.

“The Knower of the unseen and the Seen, the Great, the Most High.

“And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, and the angels too for awe of Him ; * * *

“Say : who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth ? Say : Allah. Say : Do you take then besides Him guardians who do not control any profit or harm for themselves ? Say : Are the blind and the seeing alike ? Or can the darkness and the light be equal ? Or have they set up with Allah associates who have created creation like His, so that what is created became confused to them ? Say : Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Supreme,—

“He is Allah besides whom there is no god : the Knower of the unseen and the seen ; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.

“He is Allah, besides whom there is no god ; the King, the Holy, the Author of peace, the Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness ; Glory be to Allah from what they set up (with Him).

“He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, and Fashioner ; His are the most excellent names ; Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory ; and He is the Mighty, the Wise”.

The Banishment, 22, 23, 24.

Such is the God of Islam unique in His Essence, His Person and His Attributes. There is no Son and no Holy Ghost to participate in His Essence and Attributes. There is none like Him. If the Unity of God-head be the one basis of all the higher religions of the world, it is hard indeed to find such a pure and uncompromising Unity beyond the pale of Islam. No sane

person can have the hardihood to assert that the Christian "Trinity" can ever approach the majesty and purity of the Islamic conception of the Unity. Much less can he dare to vociferate that the "Trinity" is superior to this "Unity". If God is One and that He surely is, He is One, not in the sense of the Trinity but in the sense of the real Unity of Islam. Yet the Christian critics of Islam would not see, and to them the perfect conception of God lies in the man-like God Jesus—the prophet ! !

Then again as to the Majesty of God, which is superior : "Allah Taala—the Most High God—or "our Father in Heaven"? God is unique and therefore His Majesty is unique. It can never be adequately expressed in human phraseology. But if man can ever express this Majesty, surely the word "Father" is not the best medium of expression for it. At best it brings home only the notion of the familiarity to a father. But God certainly is no relation of ours. He is the most High, and infinitely

superior to all notions underlying human relationship. His "Majesty" can not, even in the finite human phraseology, be best expressed by this notion of undue familiarity. Any attempt to introduce the notion of familiarity in the human sense, is to do away with the notion of His Majesty. It is to err at the very outset. Majesty and familiarity are two contradictory terms and can never co-exist. Of course, we can afford to be a little more familiar with God but only when we actively feel His nearness and are so immersed in His love that He is truly our beloved. But this state of realisation of God is not for all, as each one of us does not so feel. Therefore the term "Father" for God in the mouth of an ordinary individual is an incongruity and something out of place.

It is the notion of Gods' Majesty that infuses in us the true spirit of prayer, which is to make us realise our nothingness to the All-powerfulness of God. This makes us adopt the attitude of awe and humbleness

towards the Almighty. This is the true attitude in prayer and the one proper way to approach the Deity. The Christian maglomania of being related to God through the Son is the very negation of this reverential spirit. It is at best a puffing up as the Son's party but no puffing up can benefit our soul and therefore can never avail us against God. We may fondly believe and confidently assume that we are the people of the "Bridegroom's Chamber" and therefore most honourable in the eyes of the father. But this is at best a fond hope a mere belief. And the Christians can never truly find God till, in the words of their very Lord and God Jesus Christ, they are humble and meek like him. But this meekness and humility of spirit will not come to them if they afford to be puffed up by the assumption of the familiarity implied in the term "Father". As a matter of fact prayer is of the heart, and if the heart is sincere and lowly the term "Father" does not matter much with God. But then if the tongue is to be one

with the sincere heart the term "Father" must never be used for God. Human phraseology may not adequately express the notion of Divine Majesty, but if this notion can at all be conveyed in words there can be no term more significant than the term "Allah Taala—The Most High God". Yet the Christians would gloat over, and cry themselves hoarse at the beauty of the word "Father" !

There is yet another attribute of God in which the Christian world has totally misunderstood Islam. According to the reverend fathers, the Islamic conception of God is devoid of that most lovely attribute called grace. To them the God of Islam is a stern God bare like the desert rocks. We have seen already wherein lies the Christian idea of Divine Grace, what it is and where it leads us to. It would be interesting to know the Islamic conception of Divine Grace. As already observed, in Islam there is no original sin and therefore no need of a vicarious atonement. Man is naturally

pure and all that he wants to remove the animal tendencies in his nature, is already there in him as his conscience—the light of God in man. Nay, God is constantly and most intimately in him unceasingly evolving him from within. Islam therefore, does not despair of man's ultimate success like Christianity.

Allah is beneficent to a sinner and a saint alike. There is absolutely no difference in His beneficence. This beneficence is indiscriminate. It does not depend upon the merits of the creature. It is above all merits and flows automatically from the Source of All Grace. It is the one link, which unites the sinner and the saint alike. It is the one thing which reminds even the greatest enemy of Allah that Allah *is*, even for him.

But this beneficence of God should remind us of the great obligation to the Creator. It should set us working in the way of Allah. Allah is working within us unceasingly. We must respond and act

righteously. This response on our part is noble and the one thing desired by Allah. Allah is taking us with Himself. We must not revolt. We must not try to swim up-stream. This will be our undoing and this we must realise. We must realise that it is for us to obey and not to command. We have to adjust ourselves in our own interests, in the way of Allah. Allah needs no adjusting for us. He is Perfect and therefore it is for the imperfect to adjust himself in the ways of the Perfect One.

The Mercy of God, unlike His beneficence, is therefore discriminate. It is the special favour of God reserved only for such as realise their responsibilities in life, those who would respond to the Divine efforts within. It is therefore operative only when we deserve it by our merits. If we try to live rightly, His Mercy flows and embalms us. If we only try to be sincere and walk on the right path, the Mercy of Allah embraces us like our mother. If we only try

to soar up, the Divine grace comes to our help like the mother-bird trying with her powerful wings to take her young ones on to the skies. If we only struggle on the path of righteousness, the powerful hand of the Merciful Allah comes to our aid, like the hands of a father stretched out to his struggling but falling child. But struggle there must be. We must move in the right direction. We must start sincerely and then the invisible hand of Mercy is visible to us and we feel that God is really with us. We feel and are forced to feel that the Divine Mercy is with us and that there is a power overshadowing us from above like clouds and protecting us from all harms below. We feel that the Mercy of Allah is our companion—asleep or awake. But the price has to be paid and the troubles undergone. This conscious life in God is not easy. It is no bed of roses. It is a struggle all-through. It is a fight against tremendous odds, against the whole legions of the Devil. No mere

belief will help us. No doctrine will save us. It is action and action alone that will help us. It is the one way to set the Mercy of Allah in motion. But for this, Allah's Mercy, although all-pervading, is stationary like the calm and the infinite Ocean. It is only the steam—our action—that can take us across.

We must therefore try. We must exert. If however, we fail to move in the right direction, we must realise the hard fact that there is no mercy for us. We may not be the best, but we must be sincere. We must begin to move in our own light. We must be up and doing. We must do our duty and leave the rest to God. We must work with heart within and God overhead. "Trust in God and do the right" should be our maxim. If, however, we do not, if we are idlers, if we consciously and deliberately throw away our opportunities given to us by the Merciful Allah, we must reap the consequences. No prophets of the world can save us. God himself will not

save us and we have no right to expect such a salvation. If we can not unlock the door of Divine Mercy with the key of our sincere actions, we must rest content to live outside the Divine Chamber. If we would not open our shutters, we must remain in darkness. But the Sun shines constantly and invites us all to be benefitted by the light. Even if we do not accept this invitation, the Sun folds not away its rays in revengefulness or petty irritation. It is still there awaiting those who would like to be benefitted. If we do not open our mouth no morsel of food can go in, no amount of milk can do us any good. But the milk is there. The spoon is there. Let those, who would, exert and feed fat on the milk. If, however, we can not move, we must pine and pine and in our naughtiness must die.

This is how in Islam the Divine Mercy is set in motion. Once moved, the mercy of Allah knows no bound. It is like a gushing stream from the top of a mountain.

Allah is Most Merciful and Compassionate and every chapter of the Holy Quran opens with these words. According to Islam the attribute of mercy reigns over all other Divine Attributes.

"... .. And My mercy encompasses all things ; so I will ordain it (specially) for those who guard (against evil) and pay the poor rate, and those who believe in our communications"—

The Elevated Places, 156.

"... .. He has ordained mercy on Himself"—

The Cattle : 12.

Thus Islam depicts the picture of a most Merciful God. And man truly stands in need of Divine grace. Without the grace of God even the prophet of Islam according to his own statement could not attain salvation. Yet it is for man to deserve that mercy and set it in motion by his personal efforts. In short, the Islamic picture of God is that of a Being, who through His essential beneficence gives us all the neces-

sities of life without any distinction and without personal merits and, through His essential justice, reserves greater reward for those of His creatures who deserve it through their sincere efforts. In awarding this reward God is extremely generous and therefore He is Merciful.

This is the idea of Divine mercy in Islam. It is concisely and beautifully embodied in the following saying of the Holy Founder of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) "Ar-Rahman is the Benificent God whose love and mercy are manifested in the creation of the world, and AR—Rahim is the Merciful God whose love and mercy are manifested in the state that comes after" How true, how concise and how deep the utterance yet to the Christians, it is the saying of a mere "Imposter" a "Dreamer of the Desert" "the one inspired by the Devil" !! If such a conception of the Divine Mercy be that of the "Dreamer of the Desert" the "one inspired by the devil" would to God that

the Christians would give to the world their better conception of Divine Mercy—not of course that conception already described—but a conception really superior to that of the *Great Dreamer* ! Let a Christian ransack his brain. Let the reverend gentlemen come forward with their conception of God. Let the hostile critics of Islam, a Sir William Muir, a Sale search their souls in their graves and see if ever their Christian mentality could conceive so beautiful a conception of God's grace. If not, let them be ashamed and acknowledge their guilt of doing a moral wrong to the religion of one, who alone has given to religion the final touch and who and who alone, has depicted the beautiful vision of God's Mercy in conformity with the Laws of Nature and the experience of man. May God pardon these intellectual parrots ! May God grant the Christians the eye to see the beauty of the Islamic conception of Divine grace and the horror of the Divine conception of grace through human sacrifice ! Let the readers

decide whether the true conception of Divine grace lies in Islam or Christianity.

There is yet another point to be cleared up. Islam lays stress upon fear of God and Christianity emphasises love of God. This has led the Christians to assume that Islam teaches only fear of God and that love of God is a speciality of the teachings of the religion of the Bible alone. Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth. True, Christianity teaches nothing but love of God and makes love the only door leading to our realisation of God. That love is the one way to attain God is undoubted. But the question is: is this preaching sufficient to make man love God? Can the mere fact that God is love and hence we should love Him, suffice to induce us to love Him? Can this proposition create love of God in man? Let us see. God is Holy and therefore in order to be capable of loving the Holy One we have to be holy first. To a man given to the pleasures of the senses, the love of God is a passion alien

to his nature. The very nature has to be changed before that passion becomes his. What however, can change the nature of such a man ? What can convert him into a man capable of loving the Holy One ? It can be nothing else but a sincere move in the right direction on the part of the man. If he gives up his evil ways and tries to live a better life then alone can his nature be changed and then alone can he be rendered capable of loving the Holy One. Thus the love of God in the life of man is a passion which is developed after first living a good life actively. There may conceivably be a few men so pure of nature as to love God from the very beginning of their life. But these must be treated as exceptions.

Thus initially as a general rule, there is no love of God in man. And to this class belong by far the greatest majority of mankind. How then to make them capable of loving God is the question and this problem has been solved by Islam and Islam alone. Islam therefore lays stress upon fear of God

and impresses the judicial attributes of God upon man. Man spiritually is like a child and requires the whip of the Teacher initially. This whip in Islam is the fear of God as a result of His judicial attributes. This whip tends to keep man on the path enjoined by religion and when for sometime that path has been strictly trodden, to walk in righteousness becomes a second nature and the revolting spirit of man—his animal tendency—is curbed and kept in check. Thus the fear of God kills the animal in man and then of course, the love of God begins to dawn and henceforth his action is directed and controlled not by fear but by the love of God, and the Divine Love responding most irresistibly pulls him on to the abode of all bliss—the life in God. But it must be recognised that, but for this initial whip and discipline of the Fear, the charm of the Love of God ultimately is impossible.

Therefore all that is humanly possible is the necessity of the whip of Fear initially

to create in us the Love of God, the real road leading to the God-head.

This demonstrates the wisdom lying at the root of the Islamic stress upon fear initially. 'While Christianity only preaches love of God, Islam goes deeper and preaches first the fear of God and love of God will follow automatically. Thus Islam not only preaches a goal but also shows how best to attain it. This is the difference between Islam and Christianity. Islam takes the mere preaching as nothing unless the practical way leading to the realisation of this preaching is shown. Therefore Islam lays stress upon fear of God initially but in later stages when the animal in man has been killed it lays stress upon love of God and requires us to do all that we do for the love of God. As a matter of fact our very life is to be sacrificed at the altar of Divine Love. We are to be the moth around the lamp of the Love of God.

Christian friends be impartial. Be tolerant. Let not your worldly power mislead

you. Remember that you can never extinguish "the Light of God" by your breath, do all you can. The more you vociferate the louder shall grow the voice of truth. Islam is truth and as such no harm by human hand can be done to it. All that you can do is to cast dust at the gold. But the dust only covers the glitter and the moment the dust is shaken off, the gold glitters again. This mental dust cast at the gold of Islam by prejudiced and interested Christian critics, has hidden the real gold of Islam from your view. Just try to shove this away with sincerity and open-mindedness and presently you will come face to face with that unique brilliance of the gold of Islam which will prove your gold to be counterfeit. But depend not upon the missionaries. Be fed not on the spoon. There has been already enough of it. Remember that those fed on the spoon are mere invalids. Has not God made you whole ? Can't you stand on your own legs ? If so, why depend upon the missionaries

alone ? Why give missionaries undue importance in your creed ? Can't you be a missionary to yourself ? Why allow the missionaries to be the keeper of your conscience ? Have you so far fallen away from the all-pervading Mercy of God as to think that you are yourself unable to approach Him ? Is it the result of the boasted nearness to God through His only Son ?

While your Muslim brother is himself the keeper of his conscience and can himself approach his God, are you in need of the holy fathers—mere men like you—to intercede on your behalf ? Do you require pleaders even *with* God ? Is This your nearness to God ? Don't you think that God is for all, aye, even for the sinners ? Don't you think that your sincere prayers coming out of your afflicted heart, will do you more in the way of securing for you the Divine forgiveness than the hired and lip prayer of all the reverend fathers on earth ? If so, why confess to a priest ? Why be

so lowly to a man—a mere man like you ? Why sacrifice your dignity as man by bowing your head before another man ? Why not confess to God and be lowly and sincerely humble before Him, who alone can forgive your sins ? Yet this is what at least the Catholic Church teaches. Is this the nearness to God ? Is this the Christian idea of grace that his God would not even condescend to hear from him but through the priests—the human pleaders ?

After all this, don't you think that the Islamic conception of God is more in keeping with the dignity of man and the conception of the Divine grace itself ? If so, my friends come and subscribe to Muhammad's conception of God. Come and say with him that God is unique in His Essence, His Person and His Attributes. And with this admission come and say that the Trinity is based upon the Platonism of the Apostle John developed by the Platonic Greeks. Come and discard this doctrine and be grateful to Muhammad (on whom be

peace and blessings of God) for teaching you the one truth, which to Europe is still hidden. Say "There is no God but God and that Muhammad is the prophet of God." And with this admission come and subscribe to the belief that God has raised prophets among mankind in all ages and places and that conformably to this Divine Law, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad are all the revered teachers of humanity from the same One Creator who is "The Father of all, in every clime and age." With this belief perfect your faith by the belief in the universal prophecy as a necessary corollary to the universal Fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man, which nowhere beyond the pale of Islam, has been so beautifully practised. To the Christians the brotherhood of man is yet only a precept. Go to any Muslim land and you will find the spirit of true democracy and brotherhood prevailing everywhere. There is no colour bar there. There are no whites

and no blacks there. All are one. While a native convert can not pray in the same Church with the Europeans, a Muslim beggar prays by the side of his Caliph—the Amir-ul-Mumneen—in the mosque at Constantinople. Can there be any finer example of the brother-hood of man and a more forcible admission of the Fatherhood of God in practice ?

CHAPTER V.

The Exclusiveness of Christianity Compared to the Universality of Islam.

Another essential point of difference between Islam and Christianity is in the Christian denial of the universal prophecy as opposed to Islam. To Christians the revelation of God is confined to the Israelites alone, of whom Jesus was the greatest and the last. No other nation had this Divine gift. Christians can not, in the terms of the Bible, believe in the possibility of the sources of other religions as well being Divine. The Bible has no such records and makes no such claim. On the other hand, a study of the Christian theology, as stated in the foregoing chapters, will clearly tend to show that with the specialities of the Christian belief namely, the doctrines of the Original Sin of man,

the Vicarious Atonement, the Sonship of Jesus Christ and the Trinity, the idea that others too could have been the recipient of revelation appears to be not only very remote but impossible. For, if the salvation of mankind can come through these Christian dogmas alone, as believed by the Christians, it is unthinkable to them how other nations in whose theology such dogmas are not found can be saved as well. Moreover, consistent with these beliefs of the Christians, it is certainly very natural for them to think that others can not be the recipient of Divine revelation for, revelation is meant for the salvation of man and if that salvation can be attained by no means other than a belief in these Christian dogmas, the very fact that these Christian dogmas are unique in the theology of the world to be found nowhere beyond the pale of Christendom, is proof enough to establish that no nation had any revelation at all. If man is naturally a sinner and can never be saved by any means other than

that of the Vicarious Atonement, as taught by Christianity, it is certainly an incongruity on the part of a Christian to say that others as well for whom no such Atonement took place can be saved at all. As a matter of fact, an orthodox Christian can not consistently allow revelation even to the Isrælties, from whose creed the special Christian dogmas, the only means of salvation, are absent. Thus the Christian dogmas tend to prove that a Christian can not believe revelation being vouchsafed to any nation before and after Christ. This again places him between the horns of a dilemma. If God is Merciful He must have granted revelation, the only means of salvation, to other nations as well, and in that case the Christian doctrine of Vicarious Atonement with its necessary antecedent the doctrine of the Original Sin of man and its necessary sequel the doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus leading to the Trinity can not be the only means of salvation. If, however, God did not grant revelation to others before or after

Christ, He was not Merciful. As even the Christians say that God is Merciful, He must have granted revelation to others as well. If so, the Christian doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement with all its precedent and sequels falls to the ground. Thus at every doctrine of the Church, a Christian is faced with the horns of a dilemma, and according to the uniqueness of his beliefs, he must reject the doctrine of universal prophecy which consists in the belief that God, as the Merciful Creator of all human beings must, by virtue of His own Beneficent Nature, grant revelation to all nations and send prophets among all of them for their guidance at all times and in all places.

The case, however, is quite different with Islam. Islam not only recognises the universal prophecy, as will appear from innumerable verses scattered all over the Holy Qur-an reiterating and emphasising this belief, but it does even more. It makes this belief an article of faith with the Muslims, which every Muslim must accept if he is to

remain a Muslim. The Holy Qur-an beautifully sums up the whole position in the following verses :—

1. *“Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the triles, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit”*--

2. *“Surely those who disbelieve in Allah and His Apostles and (those who) desire to make a distinction between Allah and His Apostles and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others; and desire to take a course between (this and) that,*

3. *“These it is that are truly unbelievers, and we have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement.*

4. *“And those who believe in Allah and His Apostles and do not make a distinction between any of them—Allah will grant them*

their rewards; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful".

The Women, 150—152.

5. *"And every nation had an Apostle; so when their Apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice and they shall not be dealt with unjustly".*

Jonah, 47.

6. *"Surely we have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news and a warner; and there is not a people but a warner has gone among them"—*

The Originator, 24.

7. *"(All)people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed; and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves; * * *"*

The Cow, 213.

The first verse sums up the belief of a

Muslim and emphasises the belief in the universal prophecy and commands Muslims not to make distinctions between the prophets of the Lord, for the obvious reason that an attempt at such a discrimination may tend to create the spirit of undue criticism of these great ones of God, the revered teachers of humanity and may thus engender the spirit of ingratitude not only to these great men directly but, even to God, indirectly. This spirit of ingratitude is too uncongenial to the catholic spirit of Islam, which came to broaden the religious spirit of man by demolishing sectarian and tribal views regarding prophets and religion by inculcating the great principle that, since mankind is one great family, the great ones of humanity—the prophets—whenever and wherever they may have come, must be honoured by all human beings, because they come from the same One, who is the Creator of all, to reclaim, if not them directly, their brethren living on the same earth and under the same sun,

although in a different corner of the world and at a different cycle of time. Time and place can never change the fact that mankind is one family and hence one brotherhood. To God it has always been so. The mission of Islam is to make mankind not only realise this but to establish this brotherhood in practice. And hence it starts with this great belief in the universal prophecy, because universal brotherhood is impossible without an universal religion acceptable by all mankind, and a universal religion is unthinkable without first preparing the ground by widening the religious outlook of man through the belief in the universal prophecy. Islam therefore claims to be a universal religion in a sense in which no religion on earth yet, much less Christianity, can claim to be universal. Islam is the only religion which has in practice cleared the ground for the universal religion by preaching the universal prophecy and establishing a real and better brotherhood of man among the four-hundred

millions of human beings—whites and blacks, browns and yellows—scattered all over the globe. Go to the desert of Sahara, the wilds of Africa, the fertile plains of Asia, you will never find a Muslim disbelieving in this great principle, so forcibly enjoined by the Holy Quran and so powerfully impressed upon by the Holy Founder of Islam. There are no Shias, no Sunnis, no Wahabies, no sects here.

The second and third verses of the Holy Quran quoted above, so much emphasise this great principle as to exclude from the fold of the Faithful such people as believe in some and disbelieve in other prophets. The fourth verse lays stress on the positive side of the above view and states that belief in the universal prophecy will be beneficial to man and hence shall be rewarded by God. The fifth sixth and seventh verses state that every nation had a prophet for its guidance. After thus establishing the belief in universal prophecy as a necessary antecedent to the universal Brother-

hood of man and the Fatherhood of God, the Holy Book refers to the great difference existing not only among nations, but even among the members of a particular nation to whom revelation was vouchsafed. • This is a great truth and we find the world a hot bed of religious differences. Surely some revelation was necessary to settle these differences—international and even sectarian. And such a revelation could only come in the fitness of time. This time can be no other than that just preceding the period when the modern world commenced. This was the sixth century A. C. and Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was born in 571 A. C. and it has pleased God to grant him that universal revelation which is destined to settle the differences, international and sectarian, of the world. Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is the world-prophet—the prophet destined to reclaim all mankind to the true path and hence Allah has thus said of him in the Holy Quran :—

“And we have not sent you but as a mercy to (all) the nations”—

The prophets, 107.

Thus Muhammad is sent not to the Israelties, not to the Ishmaelties, not to the tribes, but to the Sons of Adam—to mankind as a whole.

And, can this unique position of Muhammad be challenged? Can the Christians challenge this? If so, let them come forward with a single verse in the whole Bible proving that the Christians are taught to believe in the possibility of prophets being sent to nations other than the Israelties. As already stated this is an impossibility in the face of the peculiar belief of the Christians. And as a universal prophet is unthinkable without the belief in universal prophecy, Jesus can not be the world-prophet.

Then again Jesus himself said that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. How can he then be the world-prophet

destined to be a guide for all humanity ? Jesus further threatens the Jews in the following verse :—

“Therefore say I unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”

St. Matthew Chapter 21, verse 43

Jesus was an Israelite and if the Kingdom of God was to be taken away from the Israelites, to whom was it to be given ? Apart from the question of, to whom it has been given, it is clear according to Christ, that this Kingdom was not to remain in the house of Israel. This tantamounts to saying that the preachings of Jesus, who was the last of the Israelitic prophets, were not to remain permanent and that some other prophet, was to be raised from a nation other than the Israelites, and the Kingdom of God, so long the monopoly of the Israelites, was to be given to the followers of such a prophet. Thus even according to Jesus, he can not be the world-

prophet, as the Kingdom of God was to be taken away from his line.

Let us again consider the case of these two prophets. Jesus in his own words not only disclaims the title of the world-prophet but he goes even further and says that he is sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, and that, as these sheep would not listen to him the Kingdom of God would be taken away from the house of Israel altogether. This statement is a clear admission on the part of Christ of another prophet being raised after him. Thus Jesus' claim is confined only to the lost sheep of Israel and at best he remains only a tribal prophet. The case of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is quite different. He comes after Christ and according to the prophecy of Jesus and of Moses he fulfils in his person all those conditions foretold about him. To fulfil the prophecy of Moses he comes from Mount Paran with ten thousand pilgrims and to fulfil the prophecy of Jesus, he makes the Arabs and through

them the whole Moslem world, that nation which brings forth the fruits of the Kingdom of heaven. History justifies this statement. Who else can be fit to fulfil these combined prophecies of the Old and the New Testaments ? If not Muhammad who else ? Whose followers have blessed Moses and Jesus both ? Thus Muhammad is the prophet foretold by both Moses and Jesus and it is Muhammad who alone makes the astounding claim of being "a mercy to all the nations". Muhammad and not Christ is therefore the last prophet—the world-prophet.

If therefore, Muhammad alone of all the revered teachers of humanity, has not only unequivocally taught this doctrine of universal prophecy but has guarded it for all times by including this belief in the essential articles of faith of a Muslim, if Muhammed alone has practically succeeded in establishing this belief, if Muhammad alone has established a real brotherhood of man, if Muhammad alone has done more than any

one else to demolish the narrow and sectarian views about religion and prophets, who else can be the world-prophet, who else can be the settler of the great international and sectarian differences, who else can substitute Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) ? Who can doubt his being a "mercy to all the nations" ? Who has taught a greater charity ? While St. Paul's idea of charity—the best in Christendom—remains at best a type of individual charity, the charity of Muhammad is inter-religious and therefore international. Who has been greater than Muhammad in practical charity ? Mere sentimentalists there may be. Preachers of the "Sermon on the Mount" may be numerous but is there a man in history more charitable than Muhammad in practice ?

Another proof of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) being the world-prophet lies in his appeal to reason more than to miracles. Has Jesus laid greater emphasis on reason than Muhammad ?

While the religion of the Church is one continued chain from top to bottom of the spirit of wonder, the religion of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is reason incarnate. While Christianity adds mysteries after mysteries to be blindly believed in, Islam teaches simple facts alike appealing to reason and common sense. Read the Bible and everything there is mysterious. Beginning from the birth of Christ up till his very end everything is miraculous. Reason has hardly any place there. As a matter of fact, no religion requires its followers to be so credulous as Christianity does. As already shewn in the foregoing chapters, all the essentials of Christianity are mysterious unexplained and inexplicable. If man can ever reason out a belief for himself and if that reasoned belief can be correct, the essentials of Christianity are certainly of a category, which can never enter into the mental vision of any sane man by his own efforts. For example what scientist can think that all that is required

for the salvation of man is not, like the potentialities of a seed, already in him potentially. Yet this is what the doctrine of original sin hints at. What reasonable man can ever suppose that man's good actions combined with a belief in God, will not bear fruit till he believes in the Vicarious Atonement of Christ ? What sane man can ever come to the conclusion that a lamb is really necessary to be sacrificed bodily for the redemption of the sins of mankind ? Yet this is what is taught by the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement ! What Monotheist in the world can come to a conclusion by his individual thinking that God can have a Son ? What mathematician in the world can prove that one is three and three is one ? What philosopher can convincingly harmonise this contradiction ? Yet all these things are the very essence of the religion of the Church. Apart from the question of whether these doctrines are true or false, it is convincingly proved that Christianity is far far removed

from the natural religion of man, if by this religion we are to understand a religion based on the reason and experience of man in such a way as to be acceptable to human nature. It is possible for a Christian to take pride on this state of things. It may be an argument with him for the uniqueness and truth of his religion, but to those outside the pale of Christendom, the abnormality is certainly too artificial to be appealing and convincing.

Turning now to Islam, we find five things to be believed in and four things to be done. Theologically the former is called the five articles of faith and the latter is called the four principles of action. The articles of faith are the belief in (1) the uncompromising unity of the God-head, (2) the day of resurrection when man will be fully and finally rewarded or punished, (3) the existence of angels, a being whose sole duty is to invite all to good actions, (4) "Books" that is, to believe that God has vanchsafed revelation to all man-

kind as He is the Creator of all and therefore all religions are essentially from God, and the (5) Prophets, i. e. revelation which is essential for the salvation of mankind has been vouchsafed to the elect of humanity in all countries and ages and hence conformably to this great Divine Law there have been numerous prophets of whom the last is Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God).

All the semitic religions namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam are agreed at least in theory on the first three points. As regards the other two points the Jews believe that only the books of the Old Testament and the prophets therein mentioned are from God. The Christians go a step further and believe that over and above the Old Testament and its prophets the New Testament and its prophets are also from God. Islam, however, accepts not only all that Jews and Christians believe in but goes further and makes all religions and their founders as coming from God. Thus all

the three semitic religions of the world are agreed on the above five points in principle, but the special feature of Islam lies in its *making religion from God for mankind as a whole and not confining it to any particular sect or tribe*. Can the Christians say that there is anything unreasonable in the above five articles of faith of Islam or can they say that the Christian faith is as wide as Islam ? If not, how can Jesus be the world-prophet and his system a universal religion ?

The principles of action enjoined by Islam are : (1) Prayer, (2) Fasting, (3) Charity and (4) pilgrimage under certain conditions. No man can object to these four principles of action. This finishes Islamic teachings in a nutshell. Is there anything unreasonable there ? Is there anything here savouring of mystery or dogma ? It may be said there is nothing original here. The answer to this is that the only originality of Islam is to combine these articles of faith and principles of action into one harmonious

whole, which no religion but Islam has done. All these articles of faith and principles of action are found scattered like pearls in the various religions of the world. But it was reserved for Islam alone to gather these pearls and string them into one fine wreath. This gives us in a nut-shell what Islam is. Thus all the articles of faith and the principles of action enjoined by Islam are already accepted by one part of humanity or another. Nothing in Islam is therefore new, nothing mysterious. Just think how this statement that "there is nothing new in Islam" strengthens its claim for its being the universal religion. The universal religion acceptable to all human beings can not be wholly alien to any member of the human race. Every man must be aware at least of some of the articles of faith and principles of action enjoined by such a religion, otherwise it can not be believed by all men. Now, is there a single one of the Islamic articles of faith and principles of action wholly alien to any modern man ?

Is it not then the universal religion destined to be the religion of all mankind in future ? On this point says the Holy Quran :—

“He it is who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the true religion, that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse”—

The Ranks : 9.

Can claim be stronger and reason greater than in the case of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) claiming the world-prophethood and Islam claiming to be the universal religion ? Can the Christians claim so much ?

Muhammad is indeed the world-prophet and as such he can not but appeal to reason. He was sent at a time, when the modern world was to begin, when the nations of the world were to come together, and thus through this international contact the outlook of humanity at large was to be broadened, when the notions of mankind conceived separately within the geographical limits were to be demolished or modified

and when the over-credulity of man was to be doomed and that light of God in man—Reason—was to be his chief guide. Thus in the very fitness of things comes Lord Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) and teaches the value of reason, of common sense. This appeal to reason proves Muhammad to be a modern man, nay more than modern, a man fit to be the guide of all educated men of modern time and of all futurity. Miracles are not valueless. They are really impressive when personally witnessed but the mere talk of them to persons who have never happened to see one for themselves, sounds like incredulous stories and is never convincing. Miracles are thus only temporarily impressive. Reason, however, is a permanent miracle and is always appealing. An appeal to reason from whatever source it comes, is effective. It finds an ally in the individual reason and, like water flowing on water, it meets with no difficulties. Therefore the world-prophet always appealed to reason and this appeal of his

will continue to find response as long as the reason of man endures. This appeal will ever burn like a beacon light in the heart of every true Muslim to keep him safe and sound from the dangers of the darkness of the deep of credulity. This light will burn and, like the fire in the wilderness shall get brighter and brighter at every puff of wind determined to put it out.

The Sun of Reason has arisen and the darkness of credulity must pass away from the lands on which this Sun happens to cast its rays. Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) comes, not with the sword of metal given to him by his enemies, but with the sword of Reason and, by the God who gave him that sword, Lord Muhammad shall yet conquer the world. The sword of reason is getting keener day by day and, Europe the stronghold of Christian credulity has already got this sword of Muhammad and like him, is cutting to pieces the remnants of the credulity of the Church religion. Europe and in fact science, is

the best ally of Muhammad and not of that mysterious person of the Bible called Christ. The Church in Europe will live only so long as it suffices to remove the misunderstanding about Muhammad and Islam created by interested persons. A second Musa is born and in the person of Khwaja Kamaluddin and his colleagues this Musa will yet create by the help of God, all the circumstances necessary to make the rapid march of a Tarik possible a second time. And that humble Surrey mosque where the ardent soldiers of Islam are preparing for the great battle to come will prove a second Gibraltar. May Allah help them and may the banner of Islam rise triumphant floating in the temperate breeze ! May Allah fulfil the wish of the Muslim Alexander, Okba, to conquer the extreme West to preach the unity of Allah and the greatness of His religion and His Rasool (prophet) and may the Islamic missionaries in America prove to be this Okba ! May Allah guide the brothers and sisters of

America to His One True Religion—Islam !
Amen ! !

Conclusion.

In the foregoing chapters we have examined the special features of the Christian belief. We have seen how there is no such thing as original sin, how man is not naturally sinful and how sin is only circumstantial. We have seen how there is nothing essentially counterfeit in man ; how there is no load-stone of sin in him to be removed, how there is no disease in man which can not be cured by his own sincere efforts. We have seen how there is no need of any Vicarious Atonement ; how this notion of atonement is against the law of evolution ; how it is unnatural ; how it militates against the idea of Divine Grace and Justice ; how it savours of barbarism in reminding one of the idea underlying an animal sacrifice of a Fetish-worshipper ; how this doctrine is not directly and convincingly proved by the teachings of the

four Gospels themselves ; how it is an outgrowth in Christianity on the death of Christ and finally how it is 'Paulinity' and not Christianity.

We have seen how the doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus is an outgrowth on the death of Christ ; how Jesus was a puritan Jew and spoke of himself as the Son of God in the sense of the Old Testament ; how not only Israel and Melchisedec but all pious men and even common men among the Israelites are spoken of as "Sons of God" in the Old Testament ; how this idea of Divine Sonship of men did not militate against the rigid monotheism of the Israelites ; how the use of this term by St. Paul was dangerous in non-Jewish circles ; how the authenticity of the New Testament is extremely doubtful ; and therefore we can not be really sure as to how far the New Testament truly records the teachings of Christ ; how the spirit of wonder in all things connected with Christ together with the absence of written and reliable records

about him struck the imagination of the early Christians and how curiosity helped fancy and imagination to draw up a supernatural picture of Jesus ; how the early Greeks to whom the idea of sons and wives to God was familiar enough in the conception of their mythical god Zeus, helped to form the idea of a real son to God ; how the Christology became the chief object of discussion among the early Greek fathers ; how councils after councils were held to determine the nature of Christ ; how after every council the Sonship of Jesus gained ground ; how the iron discipline of the Church succeeded in keeping down public opinion till at last the doctrine of Sonship of Jesus was firmly established throughout Christendom.

We have further seen how the direct teachings of Christ nowhere support the doctrine of Trinity ; how this doctrine originated with the Platonist Apostle John, and how the Greeks well-versed in the philosophy of Plato finally succeeded in

establishing their view, till Christendom led by the Greeks, innocently accepted it. We have also seen how this Trinity with three distinct personalities namely "The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" is real Trinity and can never be Unity. Finally, we have seen how Christianity is too narrow to include in its fold all humanity like Islam. At best it is only a sectarian religion and can not, by its very peculiarities, be the universal religion so much talked of in these days. Islam alone has the qualifications of that universal religion and Islam alone is really universal.

Let the readers decide the case between Islam and Christianity. Let them use their reason and common sense and see if they are inclined to agree with Islam or with Christianity. Let them see for themselves if the vaunted superiority of Christianity over Islam lies in these doctrines. Let them try and see if the Christian dogmas, which alone make and unmake Christians according to the Church, are as convincing

and appealing as the simple common-sense view of Islam on the same topics. If there are people who after reading this small volume are inclined to agree with Islam, let them in the name of Truth, of God, try their very best to remove, as far as possible, the misunderstanding about Islam created by interested persons. Islam is a universal religion and although, it has not yet been recognised to be so due to the ignorance of men, yet if "the child is father of the man" is ever true, it is true in the case of Islam. The period when Islam will begin to be recognised by all human beings is only just dawning, and the keen religious competition brought about with the advent of the twentieth century is as potent a sign of the nearness of the ultimate triumph of Islam as the beginning of a great battle, is to the nearness of the final victory of the stronger opponent. To honour Islam is, therefore, to honour all religions potentially, and to bless the memory of the Holy Founder of this univer-

sal religion, who taught respect for the great ones of humanity, is to show real respect to all prophets of the world. Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is the avenger of the honour of all prophets, and as such, he deserves the love and gratitude of all men—Hindus, Jews, Christians and others. And if there was ever born in history a man, dis-respect to whom is real dis-respect to all the great ones of humanity, it is Muhammad the Great Arabian, the world-prophet, (on whom be peace and blessings of God) Muhammad is thus the gate-way, through whom all such must pass as would like to be the member of that happy millenium vainly looked for by the Christians. All those who are advanced enough to look beyond mere sectarian view of religion and prophets; all those who would not pray to monopolise all good to themselves but would have the heart to rejoice at the good wherever and by whomsoever done; all those who would like to rise beyond the narrow

view of patriotism bounded by geographical limits and would prefer to be the member of a brotherhood wide as humanity ; all those who would like not to bow down to mere mortals for the forgiveness of sins ; all those to whom the colour shall be no bar ; all those to whom priests are religious pests ; all those sick of caste and its disadvantages ; all those eager to see God as He really is ; all those willing to know the secret of true prayer and worship and all those preferring the reality to the unreality of this worldly life, must join sooner or later the cult of Lord Muhammad, the religion of "Thy will and not mine." And if there is a proposition ever true, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the prophet of God" is that proposition. Yet to the Christians this Muhammad is only an "Imposter" "a Forger" "the one inspired by the Devil" !! May the God of Mercy, of Love open the heart of such Christians to receive the light of Lord Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) !

Lest all this may sound to the Christians like the ravings of a mad Mulla some characteristics of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) will not be out of place here.

The first great characteristic of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is that he is historical in a sense in which none of the great religious teachers of the world is historical. R. Bosworth Smith in his "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" says "We know indeed some fragments of a fragment of Christ's life ; but who can lift the veil of thirty years that prepared the way for the three ?

* * *

What do we know of His mother, of His home life, of His early friends, and His relation to them, of the gradual dawning, or, it may be, the sudden revelation, of His Divine mission ? How many questions about Him occur to each of us that must always remain questions !

But in Mohammedanism everything is

different ; here instead of the shadowy and the mysterious we have history—we know as much of Mohammed as we do even of “Luther and Milton”.

Thus even according to Christians, the Holy Founder of Islam is a historical person, and has in this respect, a decided advantage over that mythical person of the Bible, called Christ. Over thirteen centuries passed that Lord Muhammad lived on this earth, yet to a Muslim he is ever present. In his five daily prayers, in his ideas, in his daily business, the hallowed memory of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is a Muslim's constant companion. We see him exactly as he was in his native land of Arabia. We see him an orphan, a promising boy, a noble youth, a good citizen, a trustworthy man gaining the confidence of his fellow men, a loving and devoted husband, a successful trader, a philanthropist, a man striving after God, the prophet of Allah receiving his light in the cave of Hera, the one who suffered all imaginable

kinds of devilish persecutions at the hands of the savage and ferocious Koraish for the major part of his 13 years' stay at Mecca after his prophetic mission, the man of strong belief in God whom no persecution, no threat and no danger could upset, the one who in the darkest moment of gloom could clearly see his ultimate triumph ; the man who cursed not his bitterest enemies ; the man though, insulted pursued, stoned and bleeding, could only say "May God forgive them for they do not know" ; the one advising his devoted but persecuted followers to leave the city of Mecca ; the one manfully standing at the helm of the ship till the very last ; the one persecuted first but the last to leave ; the one out of the city of Mecca ; the one sacrificing his all for God ; the one taking shelter in the cave and telling his faithful friend to fear not, as God was with them ; the one safe and sound at Medina ; the one working like a common day labourer in erecting the first humble mosque of Islam ; the one attacked

at Medina ; the one defending his followers like a great soldier and captain ; the one conquering Mecca and spreading unique forgiveness to his bitterest enemies—the enemies of his life, of his followers, of his religion and even of God ; the one sending and receiving deputations ; the one greater than a king yet the most unassuming and humble ; the one sleeping on a mat, patching his own garments and milking his goats himself, the one preaching his practical “Sermon on the Mount” ; the one alike great as Law-giver, King and Prophet and finally the greatest of men, the most successful of prophets going back to the fellowship on High.

Such is Lord Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) so vividly before our eyes that time has done little to blur his hallowed memory from the grateful hearts of his followers. No prophet is so historical. As a matter of fact, all the great religious teachers by this time are more or less mythical persons. Christ is historically dead and his personality is sur-

rounded by that credulous sanctity, so characteristic of a mythical personage. Being beyond the horizon of light, the followers of mythical personages, may claim for their prophets anything that credulity may suggest to them without any fear of historical criticism. This is exactly the position of Christ for whom the utmost that the imagination of man could suggest, has been claimed till credulity has made of him, not only the only begotten Son of God, but God himself ! For Lord Muhammad we claim nothing that he was not. As a matter of fact, the more we think of Lord Muhammad and his difficulties and realise the fullness of his success and the completeness of his religious reforms the more we are struck with awe for that Holy Personality, and begin to think in amazement as to what he was not. Could a Muslim afford to be as credulous as his Christian brother, he could with more reason say that if God was ever incarnated on earth, it was in Lord Muhammad and in none else.

Another great characteristic of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is his appeal to reason as already stated. He bases his claim to the prophethood not wholly on miracles, like the Christ of the Bible, but upon his simple and rational teachings. In Islam there are no such mysteries as the doctrines of the Vicarious Atonement, the Sonship of Jesus and the Trinity. Islam takes reason as the best ally of faith and not an obstacle to it, as is the case with Christianity. There is nothing in Islam which the reason of man can reject. In being a Muslim one has to keep his reasons about him and not to divorce them altogether as is the case in the religion of the Church. That this is no idle boast will be apparent to any one who goes through the Bible and reads the Holy Quran and the sayings of the prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God). The contrast will be vivid and impressive. While, to accept what the New Testament records, you have to be credulous like a

child believing in all sorts of miracles from beginning to end, to accept all that is recorded in the Holy Quran you have to be truly reasonable. Therefore to Gibbon Islam was a creed too sublime for the then faculties of the Christians and is a creed to which a philosophic theist might well subscribe. It is really strange how the over abundance of miracles recorded in the Bible can be convincing and appealing to the materialistic West, which above all, boasts itself of its strong and sound common sense. How can such overdoses of the supernatural appeal to the cold analytic and scientific West ? It is no wonder therefore, if the West treats even the rare Church-going as mere fashion ! Too much of credulity must kill credulity by way of reaction, and that is exactly the malady of Christendom to-day. Religion which was considered to consist in mere mysteries has died out from the individuals and mere reason is now getting hold of the educated European mind. Now is the opportunity for

Islam, and the great mystery, why the Saracens were baffled in their attempt to conquer Europe in the 8th century by Charles Martel, is beginning only now to be solved. Europe was then too ignorant and far below the level of men fit to receive the final phase of religion—Islam. It had therefore to wait. It has been in the purgatory for the last eleven hundred years or so, and now the harvest is ripe and it only requires labourers to gather it. Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) shall now have Europe and will thus prove his superiority over the Christ of the Bible. As a matter of fact Europe is already Muslim in principle, although unconsciously. The European laws—international, civil or criminal are based not upon “Resist no evil” of Christ but upon “Repel evil by all means” of Lord Muhammad who alone is a practical guide in all phases of life between a subject and a king. All that remains for Europeans is therefore to formally acknowledge the mission of him whose prin-

ciple is already their guide in all things that are good in them. The time is not far distant when Europe will be grateful to Lord Muhammad and his system.

The third great characteristic of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is his magnetic personality. All those who came in contact with him were forced to feel his magnetic influence. To his persecutors at Mecca his personality was an object of fear; not because any violence was apprehended, but because the Koraish were afraid of the great impression which Lord Muhammad invariably made upon all who approached him. Therefore the Meccans would not allow even the strangers to approach him. Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was called by them a magician. And indeed a magician he was! His reserved but cheerful demeanour, his unassuming manners, his truly democratic spirit which would not suffer him to tolerate too much respect from his devoted followers, his meekness, but not

that extreme meekness derogatory to self-respect, his humility but not the humility at the expense of principles, his unique firmness in matters of religion, his undaunted courage and total fearlessness of men, his selflessness, his frankness, his undoubted sincerity, his great and unique forgiveness, his extreme patience, his fatherly love for his followers, his unique reliance on God, his total unworldliness, his unique simplicity, his constant and hearty hospitality and above all, his ever-ready and bewitching smile together with his handsome manly appearance, combine to make Lord Muhammad an enchanter indeed ! not for the Arabs of the 7th century alone, but for men of all ages ! Lord Muhammad has been able to captivate the hearts of his followers as no man in history has ever done. None of his immediate disciples ever forsook him. Many suffered terrible tortures and deaths for him but not even one did so much as to think ill of him. Like a true shepherd Lord Muhammad had the Divine gift not only to gather his

sheep around him, but also the power to make the sheep love him. Such is Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) the man of real history, not a mythical person. And what about the personality of the Christ of the Bible? Why! his own disciple betrays him, his principal disciple Peter denies him thrice and all flee for fear of their lives on the arrest of Christ. Such is the personality of the Christ of the Bible, aided by all the power of the great miracles recorded of him. Christ could not inspire even his immediate and chiefest disciples with that love of truth which seeks to sacrifice all in the way of the Lord. If there was born in history a man with such a personality it was Lord Muhammad and not Christ of the Bible.

The 4th characteristic of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) is his unique reliance on God. All prophets of the Lord must, by the very nature of their mission, feel the nearness of God and must therefore rely on Him. But the test

of the strength of the faith in God is the ability to endure persecutions and hardships and face danger and even death calmly, and the greater the trouble the surer the test. Now, of all historical prophets, is there one who was more bitterly persecuted for so long a time as was Lord Muhammad ? Can the troubles of Christ be compared with those of Muhammad ? Christ preached the gospel at best for about three years and during the major portion of this period there was absolutely no violence used against him. It is only towards the very end that the Jews became furious against him. The incident of the Garden recorded in chapter 26 of St. Matthew clearly shows that Jesus was apprehensive of the Jews and he therefore asked his followers to keep a watch around him while he prayed. His prayer there betrays the weakness of the flesh and he prays to God for averting his fate (i. e. the crucifixion) if possible. He is however, betrayed by his own disciple and is crucified. On the Cross he cries "Eli,

Eli, lama sabachthani—My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” This is the cry of the man Jesus through the weakness of the flesh. The pain indeed must have been intense—too acute for human spirit to bear. But Jesus fully knew that this was the will of God and it was to happen so. He even foretold this according to the Gospel narrative. If so, why this cry of despair ? What could make Jesus believe that God had forsaken him ? Was he not already aware that all this would happen ? Under the circumstances does it not cast a serious doubt on the strength of the faith of Jesus in God ? Does it not prove that the faith of Jesus in God when put to the bitter test failed ? The Bible narrative can hardly bear any other interpretation.

Moreover the real test of faith lies not so much even in bearing a sudden death patiently. There have been many men who have kept themselves calm up to the very end. The Irish rebels tried by English judges recently kept

themselves cheerful throughout. No fear, no despair possessed them up to the very end. This is admirable, but still more admirable is the man who yields not to long and continued tortures—physical, mental or moral. Such a test of faith was denied to Jesus and the only test that was offered to him, found him, according to the Bible narrative itself, wanting.

Now just turn to Lord Muhammad and see how he preaches for 23 long years as against 3 years of Christ. See how the Koraish—the nobility of Mecca, the custodians of Kaaba, the sacred temple of all Arabia—rise against him; how they try every expedient to buy him off; how they offer him wealth, beauty and rank if Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) only turns away from his religion; how he looks down upon this offer—the best that the world could give him—and unflinchingly sticks to his mission; how the Koraish now vilify him; what constant humiliation they put him to;

what mental tortures they subject him to ; how Abu Jehal becomes his arch enemy and how his wife scatters thorns habitually on Lord Muhammad's path ; how the ruffians set up by the wicked Koraish jeer at him ; how even in the Kaaba Lord Muhammad is nearly strangled while praying ; how the Koraish go on a deputation to Abu Talib, his uncle to prevail upon him to warn Lord Muhammad of his dangers if he persists in his mission ; how the revered old man requests his holy nephew to give up his mission as he felt too weak to protect him from the rising temper of the Koraish ; how Lord Muhammad replies in the memorable words that even if they place the sun on his right and the moon on his left hand, he would never give up the mission entrusted to him by Allah and would grudge not if he lose his very life in the attempt. So saying Lord Muhammad turned to leave his uncle's house—his last human refuge. But the affectionate uncle would not allow

this. For three long years Muhammad and Muhammad's are non-co-operated with by the Koraish and suffer all sorts of hardship caused by famine in the besieged quarter. Even when released of this captivity, the surge of the rising temper of the Koraish rises higher and higher till Mecca becomes too hot for Lord Muhammad and his devoted band of followers. Like the heroic captain of a ship in storm, Lord Muhammad tries his best to save his crew. He advises them to migrate, and thus when all have left, the united anger of the Koraish turns upon the one still left among them. They confer and decide upon his immediate death. But the Allah of Muhammad in whom the strength of Muhammad lay, was too powerful for them even here, and the mighty hand of the Lord, ensures safety to his true servant and prophet. Muhammad the hero, Muhammad devoted to his cause as no man ever was, leaves the city of Mecca with a sigh, not for his personal loss, but at the perver-

'sity of the land of his birth which could not see the great height to which he was inviting it.

At last leaves the prophet, Rasool Allah, with his devoted and true friend, Abu Bakr and takes refuge in a cave near Mecca. The blood-haunds—the Koraish—approach at the very mouth of the cave, so near that their feet are visible to the heroic two. Abu Bakr, "The True", the fearless, trembles, not for fear of his own life, but for the safety of his beloved Master, the Rasool Allah. The Rasool Allah however, is quite calm and unconcerned. Allah is with him. They are not two but three. They are not weak but too powerful as the Almighty is with them. So says Lord Muhammad even there. In the battle of Ohod, at a critical moment when the enemy is getting the upper hand, and the handful of the Muslims are being scattered, Muhammad, Rasool Allah, wards off the enemy's attack from his followers and cries at the top of his voice "I am Muhammad, I am Rasool

Allah, the Prophet of Allah". The enemy recognise him and, like an avalanche, come down upon that one man. But Muhammad is a mountain, because Allah is with him. And that voice issuing from his blessed lips, gathers the Faithful around him and a living wall of flesh and blood surround him, and the steel of the enemy is blunted upon the solid rock of courage and devotion, inspired by a true and magnetic personality. The enemy is routed and the handful of Muslims have the day. If "heart within and God over head" was ever acted upon it was never done better. If soul force braces the human frame, it braced Lord Muhammad and his followers.

Again in the battle of Honain, the enemy press, the Muslims flee. But the prophet keeps his ground. On and on comes the surging tide of the enemy flushed with initial success. But the faith of Rasool-Allah in Allah is sufficient. He stands there calm and reserved. Fear he has none. The assurance of Allah, Muhammad's most potent weapon

is with him. The same blessed voice "I am Muhammad I am the Prophet of Allah" rallies the Muslims, the enemy is routed and, out of defeat, the faith of Lord Muhammad snatches victory. Leave aside the mythical personages for whom anything may be claimed, come to the light of history and see, if there was ever born a man with greater reliance on God in practice ? Has there been a man, who had the opportunity—the test of faith in God—so ample and who was so successful in the bitter test ? Was Christ of the Bible put to such a test and if so, was he so successful ? Never did Lord Muhammad utter "*Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani—My God My God why hast thou forsaken me ?*" If human faith in God is ever unique, it is indeed the faith of the Great Arabian. And if in real history there was ever born a man, who lived in his faith in God constantly, through thick and thin, through dangers and hardships, through the toils and moils of life, never faltering, never

wavering, never hesitating, ever calm, ever confident, ever firm, it was that historical man Muhammad, Rassool Allah, the world-prophet, the perfect example and guidance for all humanity till the sun rises no more and the moon is darkened. Had Christ lived he would indeed have followed the "Spirit of Truth, the Paraclete".

The fifth characteristic of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) and his special superiority over the Christ of the Bible lies in the fact that the earliest believers in Lord Muhammad's mission unlike that of Christ, were those who knew him most intimately namely, his wife, his bosom friend Abu Bakr, his cousin Ali and his freed slave Zaid. An imposter may impose upon others. He may conceivably be believed by his country men for some time but an imposter can never command the confidence, the awe and reverence due to a true prophet from those his own, most intimately his own. If there be no other proof of Lord Muhammad's mis-

sion, this fact alone, alike admitted by friends and foes, is sufficient to establish the claim of the Great Arabian to that high office, which it was his privilege to claim boldly. Even the worst critic of Islam—Sir William Muir—has been forced to admit the sincerity of Lord Muhammad and the truth of his claim on this very fact. Thus the most convincing test of the sincerity and character of the claimant to the prophetic mission, is on the side of Lord Muhammad and not on the side of the Christ of the Bible. Yet, if Christ be believed in, why not Muhammad? If the Christ, whose mother and brethren, according to the Christians themselves, considered him up to the very end as gone off his head, be the only Begotten Son of God—nay, even God Himself, it is inconceivable why the man Muhammad who alone possesses the unfailing test of truth and sincerity, should be denied by the Christians the privilege even of being the true servant of God—a prophet. The mentality of the people of the Church is

indeed unique, their logic queer and, like all things of the cross, their attitude mysterious. Mysteries of the Church—unexplained and inexplicable—are attempted to be solved through all the principles of interpretation often involving even sophism and remoteness. But when coming to Muhammad and his system, the reverend gentlemen conveniently put off the spectacles with which they would look at the mythical Christ and the religion ascribed to him, and would at once assume an air of superiority and sit with briefs in their hands over Muhammad's case !!

Such has been the attitude of the reverend fathers, the pillars of the church religion, the supposed embodiment of the charity of Christ, specially, and of European scholars generally. But happily the people of the West are really charitable and on the truth being known they will surely discard that Christian charity for other faiths, embodied in the reverend fathers—the soldiers of the Salvation Army in the East.

Aye, the West is educated and naturally appreciative. An artist, an astronomer and a scientist of whatever nationality are appreciated and admired by the people of the West. Nay, the least mark of merit wherever found, finds the West appreciative. Can then the people of the West fail to be appreciative ? Can not then the people of the West appreciate Lord Muhammad—the greatest spiritual scientist ? Can't they appreciate the services of that great man, who single-handed abolished idolatry in the savage land of Arabia for ever, who is the greatest teacher of a simple but uncompromising Unity of the Godhead, who has been alike great as Prophet, King and Law-giver and who is the most historical and “most successful of prophets” ? Can you people of the West justly withhold his due from you ? Can you still be misguided and be doing moral wrong to the greatest person of all history ? Can you still say that Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was a fanatic when he alone, for the first time,

taught us to be charitable to all the prophets of the world ? Can you still call him a bigot when he alone not only preached this charitable belief but safeguarded it for all times by including it in the essential article of a Muslim's faith ? Can you find nothing appealing in this man, who thus, for the first time, succeeded in establishing a belief, which upon a scholar like Max Muller dawned only the other day thirteen hundred years later ? Can you fail to appreciate the greatness of the man whose followers are certainly more charitable to the great ones of humanity than the Christian fathers—the supposed incarnation of Christ's charity ? Can't you be grateful to Lord Muhammad who honoured Christ and his mother at a time when the world looked down upon them ? Can't you be thankful to him who is the most potent defender of your saviour and the greatest avenger of the chastity of Mary ? Ah ! can even such signal services to your great ones find you only abusive towards the

Great Arabian ? Can't you appreciate the services of that great man of history who, as if by the touch of a magic wand, turned a savage people like the Arabs into a nation, the most civilised and the only torch-bearer of knowledge and science in those dark ages when Christianity was immersed in the deep gloom of ignorance and fanaticism ? Ah ! can't you appreciate the merits of him, whose followers were the main remover of that mist of ignorance which overhung Europe in those ages ? Can't you be fair to Lord Muhammad whose followers not only expedited but brought about the "Renaissance ?" Can't you appreciate that man who was the father of real democracy, not the Pseudo-democracy of the West, based upon capitalism and exploitation of the poor ? Can't you appreciate that great Master who gave you the principle on which your laws—international, civil and criminal—are based ? Can't you appreciate the "Repel evil by all means" of Lord Muhammad as opposed to "Resist no evil"

of the Christ of the Bible? Can't you see that your empire, your life all follow the law of Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of God)? Can't you see that Christianity can not be your guide? Can't you see that the ideals of Christianity embodied in the "Sermon on the Mount" are mere idealism and can be of no help to them who would like to be practical men? Can't you realise that the beauty of religion consists in preaching practical tenets, otherwise it is no religion but a mere philosophy of which there is enough beyond the pale of Christendom? People of the West! rest assured that the dreams of a philosopher can never move you on the road to religion. Religion consists in practice and things impracticable like the "Resist no evil" may be grand precepts but practical value they have none, till all of you give up your civilisation, your fine cities and beautiful villas and look to the primitive cave once more as your natural home. For you they are like cheques on a

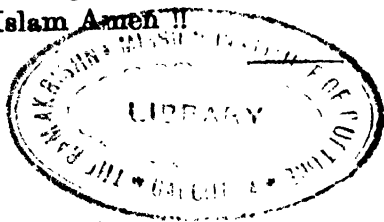
bank with which you have no account. They are mere philosophical luxuries, mental satisfaction. That is all.

In religion you have to be practical. To be practical you require practical tenets. And for these you will only vainly look to the Bible. Come to the Holy Quran and there indeed you will find a practical religion destined to reclaim the savage and the saint alike. Believe not the Christian who calls Muhammad as "the one inspired by the Devil". Do not be vulgar and uncharitable like a Sale or a Wherry. Approach the Quran yourself and hang the prejudice created in you by the interested missionaries and you will get the true religion, which will at once teach you to be charitable in your views about others.

People of the West ! as much has been given to you, much shall be demanded of you. You can not, educated as you are, afford to be doing continual moral wrong to the religion of One, who gave the final touch to religion. In amusements you

spend a lot and devote much of your time. Can't you buy a copy of the Holy Quran, not indeed Sale's Quran or the comments thereon by Rev. Wherry. Shun these as poison incarnate. Let love of truth move you, let your sense of honour arouse you to your duty to God and to yourself. Buy a copy of Maulana Muhammad Ali's Translation of the Holy Quran and see for yourself the Islam of Muhammad and not that horrid picture of Islam as shewn to you by the reverend fathers during the last thousand years or so. For God's sake only do this and throw all the missionary writings about Muhammad and Islam to the waste paper basket, which alone should be the proper place of these untruths. Read the Quran and study Islam. Islam fears no scrutiny. And, if after your study you find that Islam is really superior or inferior to that religion of the Church whose essentials are the doctrines of the Original Sin of man, the Vicarious Atonement, the Sonship of Jesus, the Trinity of the God-head, then, of

course, do your duty as your conscience—that voice of God in you—bids you do. But for truth's sake do not trust the missionaries about Islam. God has given you reason and you may argue, God has given you sense and you may judge, God has given you knowledge and you may read. But for God's sake judge not till you know. Learn this initial charity, if not from the reverend fathers, at least from Maulanas. Have the courage of your conviction. Be bold as you really are. Nothing on earth should deter you from proclaiming your faith in Islam if you are so inclined. Remember that small things, for instance, as to what people will say must not keep you back. A ditch must never deter a soldier who will face a bayonet. Be therefore what you actually feel. May God be your guide! May His Grace be upon you! May He lead you on to the right path—the path of His Holy Will. Islam Amen!!



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